





ST. MAUR.

AN EARL'S WOOING.

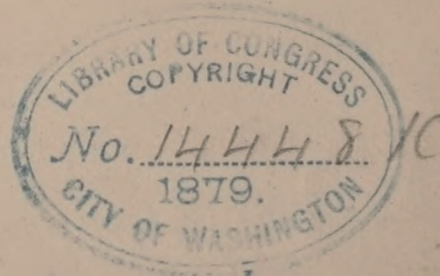
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John Carroll

"The Daves"

Baltimore Co.

Md

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"ST. MAUR; AN EARL'S WOOING" is a very peculiar work of fiction, with the scene in England, though some American characters, drawn without exaggeration, figure in it. It is decidedly sensational, with a well-constructed story, which might be regarded as too highly wrought, were it not that every mystery is set even at the close. The various action takes place in high, middle, and what may be called low life—though it does not go so far into the depths of the latter as "Oliver Twist." One of the best characters, of whom too much is not made, is a clever Detective. Most of the scenes are worked out with great effect; and the destruction of a great country mansion, by fire, in England, in which the heroine and hero are saved by the devoted self-sacrifice of Trevellyan, the Earl's tried and true friend, is most powerfully written, and the death scene of the latter is a wonderful bit of tender pathos. There is an exquisite little poem in it, the story has numerous good points, and is nicely told, the author is well acquainted with London society, and in all respects this romance of the present time will be found highly original.—CRITIC.  
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[1879]

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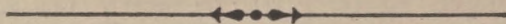
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S T. M A U R.

AN EARL'S WOOING.



CHAPTER I.

LONEDREAR HOUSE.

THE little town, or village, of Wentworth lies cosily nestled in one of those peaceful vales—more properly speaking, lovely, sequestered valleys of Derbyshire.

The ever busy foundry, the ceaseless whirr of factory wheels, even the shrill whistle of the iron horse, are, or were, things, at the date of our story, almost unknown to its inhabitants—a quiet, unpretentious people, concerned only about their own and neighbors' welfare—as much the latter as the first. It is true, Science and Progress were making rapid strides—unknown to their progenitors and executioners—for the annihilation of these blissful possessions, yet Wentworth was satisfied—

more than satisfied, so said its Innkeeper—with its distance of seven miles to the new railway station.

On the public road leading from the station there stood an old-fashioned, deserted brick mansion, surrounded by a high stone wall and garden of wild shrubbery. All things about the place bore evidence of disuse, neglect and decay. The shutters of the lower stories were still closed and securely fastened, as they had been left years before; but above, where the wind and storm had freer scope, some were barely hanging, whilst others had fallen helplessly to the ground, and were rotting and mouldering away.

Flowers and shrubs, at one time carefully planted, had, from year to year, silently dropped their seeds into the earth, and, uncultured and uncared for, had brought forth, some their ten, others their hundred fold, until the enclosure, save in places where the thick grass and coarser weeds choked the way, was covered with their many kinds. The higher parts of the stone wall had crumbled and fallen, whilst the once strong iron rods of the entrance gates were but thick layers of rust. Above the briars, which twined and interlaced them, could be seen the marble steps, stained and blackened by the damp of years.

Many were the speculations of passers-by as they looked upon this picture of modern ruin, and many the questions asked at the neighboring tavern, as to whom it belonged, or something of its history.

To the first of these queries few or none could

give a satisfactory answer, but to the last, in quite a mysterious manner, would be said:

"It is a strange tale, sir, and would, perhaps, take too long to listen to."

If the interrogatory were persisted in, and especially if the traveller decided to sup and spend the night at the "Great George Inn," which stood upon the principal street of Wentworth, Thomas Spiggott, the proprietor of that public, would say:

"If it please you, sir, after you are well rested and refreshed, I will relate it to you, as I indistinctly remember myself, and as I have oftentimes heard it from my father—God rest his soul—these twenty years and more ago. He kept this same place before me, and, it may be, in a better manner, though 'tis not I that can say it, for between here and London, I don't believe there's a better inn, nor better kept, and it is the people only, sir, who are to blame for not finding it out. However, I will repeat the tale to you as I have heard him tell it a score of times."

Thomas Spiggott's form, figure and mind were those of a model innkeeper. Large in rotundity; of a slipshod, shuffling gait; somewhat superstitious in disposition, and yet, withal, kind-hearted. During former periods the tavern had paid well, but times had changed. Few people travelled by chaise now-a-days, and the small number of visitors that chanced that way would scarcely more than keep body and soul together.

Upon such an occasion as mentioned, it being a

raw, gusty evening toward the latter part of November, the old-fashioned stage, or lumbering vehicle employed to convey passengers from the distant railway to Wentworth and the towns further inland, drew up in front of the "Great George." The coach was wet—thoroughly wet—whilst the wheels and steaming, panting horses were well spattered with mud.

The driver threw his reins loosely down, the hostlers made their appearance with the fresh change of horses, while Thomas Spiggott, with white apron and extended hand, held the door, ready to assist such as might require it in their descent. Only one passenger alighted.

"Is this the Great George Inn?" he said, in a voice slightly tinged with melancholy, apparently uncalled for in consonance with the surroundings, and, instead of rushing in for warmth and shelter, stood in the drizzling atmosphere, casting his eyes over the ancient structure, with its pointed gables, tall chimneys and many-paned windows.

"Yes, sir, this is the Great George," replied Spiggott, "and I its landlord, ever ready to welcome and loth to speed the parting guest," for sometimes he would have his little joke; "but walk in, sir, walk in. May I take your luggage?"

The new arrival looked at the speaker intently for a moment, then, handing him a travelling bag he carried, followed him into the sitting-room or bar, on one side of which stood a neat little counter, with

shelves behind. Upon these were arranged in selected order a number of half and wholly-filled decanters, their contents shining out a hospitable invitation and welcome.

In a great wide chimney, on the other side, blazed a bright fire of faggots and logs. Around this loitered several of the towns-people—the tavern's favorite customers—some with short pipes in their mouths, others with steaming glasses beside them, and all discussing the foibles and virtues of their absent fellows. They respectfully made way for the new comer, leaving him a seat in front of the hearth.

The stranger bowed courteously, and, unfastening and laying aside his wrappings, approached the fire, resting one foot upon the iron dogs, carelessly throwing his arm over the high mantel, and in this attitude gazed listlessly into the coals, as if lost to the surroundings in meditation. His age might have been thirty, his figure tall and angular, hair black and curling, with dark complexion, and a face that bore traces of either recent sorrow or suffering.

Turning from his reverie, he fell into light conversation with those around, of the village, its surroundings, and of the dreary-looking house passed by the wayside, to which last, he received the stereotyped reply, as has been stated.

There had been kept from time immemorial a book upon the counter, for the placing therein of travellers' names. Though soiled and worn by age upon the

outside, its unused pages, with the exception of being turned at the edges, were comparatively spotless. Thrice had it been bound within the present owner's recollection — once by his father, secondly by himself, and, lastly, Nicholas Toner, the saddler, had placed a stout leather cover upon it. Though not accomplished in an artistic or even neat manner, it answered the purpose, for surely, it would never require repairing.

It had not been worn by the frequency of signs manual being inscribed, but for the reason it contained all the names of guests the Inn had entertained for half a century. New arrivals would, from curiosity, or perhaps to occupy an idle moment, glance back and con over the peculiar chirography of those by-gone days.

When the traveller had become thoroughly warmed he sauntered to this book, and being handed pen and ink, in small and almost illegible characters placed his name therein; after which, loosely running over the preceding pages, and then becoming more interested, continued back, seeking for a date some thirty years previous. At last he seemed satisfied, for after gazing eagerly and for some time at a certain page, closed the book, and supper being announced, walked nervously away.

As soon as the door had closed upon his retreating figure, those good citizens of Wentworth then and there assembled, gathered around that ancient volume, and read the last written name, or what to them seemed peculiar hieroglyphics, and many were the remarks,

encomiums and speculations in regard to the late arrival.

Spiggott was not an adept in the intricacies of chi-rography, nor were any of those present; so, after each had closely scrutinized and criticised the signature, and its difference from others, they decided to wait for Timothy Tasker—whole sexton and half clerk of the village church—to solve the problem, it being within a few minutes of his regular attendance; or for Dolly, the landlord's pretty daughter. This last, when occasion required, being not only her father's receiving and dispatching amanuensis, but also his mainstay in the business. At the present moment she was waiting upon and entertaining their guest with the latest provincial news.

"Here he comes at last," said Nicholas Toner, the saddler, as the part clerk and sexton opened the door, discovering a little sharp-featured man with a halting gait, and enveloped in a great cloak hanging down to his heels.

"Whom do you mean has come, Mr. Nicholas Toner? Is it anything unusual in me to come here of the evening, and at this particular time, that should cause you to remark the occurrence, or is it to some one else you allude?" said the little man, in a sharp, small, shrill voice, as he shook the rain from off his cloak and hung it in its accustomed place.

"Oh no, no," rejoined the saddler, somewhat crest-fallen; "we were wishing you would come to read us

the name that has just been signed upon the guests' book, you know *you* are so learned. We might have made it out ourselves, but that it is written poorly."

"Written poorly? When did you become a critic in the school of chirography, that you should know the good from the bad," said Tasker, snappishly; "Mr. Spiggott, I grant you, might decide upon such questions with the utmost satisfaction to the community, and myself; but as to you, sir, I would advise—as the shoemaker to the last—'stick to your tree.'"

The sexton was *the* learned and consequently tyrannical individual of that set, and lorded it over the others with the exception of the host, for whom he had a lively respect, not only for occasional small credit, but for a concealed admiration of pretty Dolly. His companions had a much more exalted idea of his attainments than he actually deserved; for, when he was wrong, which was frequently the case, there were none to contradict.

"Good evening, Mr. Spiggott," he resumed, catching that person's eye over the bar; "our worthy saddler informs me that you have a new arrival. Shall I read the name? O, yes; I know it is not from any want of knowledge upon your part, but perhaps your eyesight is failing of an evening after candlelight? So, let *me* see," and he adjusted the lights, putting a pair of spectacles and a pinch of snuff each in their separate proper place.

"My eyesight is not failing, friend Timothy, I can

see the faults of others as well as my own," said the landlord, who acted as a break upon the other's sharpness; "but come, let's have the name, and I will mix you a punch, hot and strong, and won't score it against you. If my Dolly were not busy we should have had it long ago. Why, man alive! I do believe you are puzzled yourself!"

"Wait a bit! Let me see! This is most peculiar," cried the sexton, "the man can't write his own name. Ah! I have it now! this is it, B,—B; no, it's not a B. R, yes, R; I declare it more resembles a B than an R. R-u-p-u-s. Whoever heard of Rupus for a Christian name?" said he, glancing round.

"Rufus," suggested the saddler.

"Rufus, to be sure," they all chimed in.

The sexton looked slowly round until he encountered the humble form of Mr. Toner; looking daggers at him he turned slowly back to Spiggott, and then to the page, remarking in a shrill laugh—

"Yes, Rufus to be sure. I think *you* said Rufus, Mr. Spiggott. I have always found *you* very correct," then proceeding, "A-f-f-l-e-g-a-r-t-h. Yes, that's it, Rufus Afflegarth."

The saddler, very meekly: "Maybe it is Applegarth? I cannot read writing well, and would only make the suggestion."

"Maybe it is," said Spiggott.

"Maybe it is," said they all; "but here comes Dolly, she can tell."

At the word, in tripped a pretty brunette, with neat, plump little figure, who ran up to her father, saying:

"The gentleman is through his supper, and I have shown him into the parlor, as he preferred it instead of here. He says he would be pleased if you will come and tell him the story you promised. What can I do for you?" she added, seeing the expectant faces.

"We wanted you to read his signature," said her father, "for it seems to be but poorly spelled."

"He told it to me. He said it was Applegarth — Mr. Rufus Applegarth."

"I hope you did not ask him, Dolly?"

"No, indeed! He questioned me about Lonedrear House, and I told him a Mr. Kirby lived there a long, long while ago. Then he asked about Sir John, and the names of people about here, and what my own is; then he told me *his*; said he had come all the way from America. He appears to be a thorough gentleman."

During this colloquy, Tasker had been busily engaged in studying the writing. He now broke out in the same shrill tone:

"Didn't *I* say 'Applegarth?' or was it *you*, Mr. Spiggott, who suggested it? Yes, I know it was you, *you* are so very correct. Ah, how do you do, Miss Dolly? dear me, you are looking so well, and I suppose whilst your father is entertaining the gentleman, you will stay and," looking at the host rather deprecatingly, though, intended as a reminder "muddle me a small glass of punch, which your worthy father has

promised, of quite a high temperature and correspondingly strengthening?"

"As my father pleases."

"But you don't deserve it," said Larkins the gunsmith, breaking in, rather brave in the presence of Dolly.

"Don't deserve it," shrieked the little man, "and didn't I read the name?"

"No," said Jerry Hardin, the self-appointed carrier of letters and packages through the neighborhood, and by no means averse to the charms of the damsel.

"*Who* did then?" cried the clerk, almost beside himself with rage.

"Why, Nicholas Toner helped, and Dolly told you."

"Ah! Miss Dolly! *that* might be; but Nicholas Toner help *me*! any of you help to teach *me*!" and he blew a breath from between his lips as though he would have puffed them all out like the flame of a candle.

"Tut, tut, man, take your glass; Dolly is brewing it. And, my daughter, remember — only two glasses — for as my name is Thomas Spiggott, I will have no drunkenness in my house."

Thus saying, he strode out of the room, feeling satisfied that his injunction would be obeyed, whilst the rest, remaining, discussed the new arrival and the same topics of yesternight, and departed in the usual manner at the usual time, Tasker, as usual, receiving no more nor less encouragement from the fair Dolly.

CHAPTER II.

THE INNKEEPER'S STORY.

AS Spiggott entered the room in which the guest was seated, before a fire of bright coals, he was accosted with —

“Well, my good host, I am waiting patiently,”—but his manner betrayed impatience—“for the story you promised.”

“Sir, I am ready,” replied the other, “but as the tale is long, and none of the brightest, would it not be better to have something to cheer the time?”

This was said not only with an eye to business, but upon such times as the recital was necessary, a reinforcement of spirits was required.

“By all means! let us have some mulled ale, as I have drank it in London.”

“Mulled ale let it be, sir, and of the best,” said the landlord, as he departed with alacrity, and presently returned bearing a pitcher of that excellent commodity, smoking hot, placing it among the embers. “I have warmed it myself, sir, and you will find it exactly suitable to the atmosphere without. How it does blow. I pity those without shelter this night;” and he poured two steaming mugsful from the vessel, taking a hearty draught.

"You say right, landlord; it is a fearful night. The storm was bad enough as I came along, but it seems to have increased. Hark! Is not that some one I hear rapping at the window, or is it the blast?"

"I hear it, sir," returned the other. "God bless me!" slapping his hand with a loud smack upon his knee, "but this is the very night upon which my tale begins. Ay, sir, I hear; it is the blast, and then again it is not the blast, that same which I have heard this many a year upon this same night, the rattling of the panes as though some one knocked without, and the low moan of the wind whistling by. This is the night, and upon its recurrence each year the same sad notes and wailing sounds are heard, when the foul fiend himself must walk abroad, for never were such deeds in Wentworth except upon this anniversary. Once it was Robert Tucker, whose wife brought forth twins, and before morning both were dead; and then Timothy Tasker, who dug, in Wentworth churchyard, three graves in the same day; and—and next," his voice shook a little, "it was my own Rosa, my own child, who left me for—for—the worst that child can come to; but," and his face brightened, "I have Dolly left, and she will keep her father's side, hap' what may."

"I am sorry for you, landlord, I can feel for one who loses a child in that hard way, but we all have our sorrows, each knoweth his own best. Hark, again, surely that is some one who, seeing the light and cheerful fire within, pleads for hospitality. I will open the window

and see." He suited the action to the word, but only the wind and rain dashed in his face, and he quickly closed it again.

"It is nothing but the storm," and reseating himself said: "Now, tell me of the occurrences of which you speak. Tell them as you heard and know them," and he shaded his face from the light, his brow bent deep in his hand.

"Well, sir, it was thirty years ago this very night, as I have said, perhaps before you were born"—and he glanced questioninglly at the face under the shadow, but with no response—"that in just such a storm as this, only the wind blew stronger and fiercer—for the sign of the Great George was torn down, and that has never occurred since—there dashed up to the door a hard driven post-chaise, from which alighted a gentleman and lady. She was of rare beauty, whilst he had a dark, forbidding countenance, with a strong cast of Jewish features. He demanded the best room, and was profuse in orders.

"It was easy to detect the condition of the poor lady. She was past that time when concealment was of use. They supped in their chamber, and it was my mother who waited upon them from the first, for her sympathies were strongly enlisted. After having duly attended them, and being satisfied nothing more was required, she, with my father, made preparations for retiring. They had scarcely commenced when they were alarmed by loud voices from the strangers' room.

My mother hastily repaired thither, my father following close. She rapped, and was admitted, but saw nothing extraordinary, save that the lady had a handkerchief to her eyes and seemed much agitated. The gentleman appeared unconcerned. A large flask and tumbler were upon the table, and the room smelled strongly of brandy, but when to her inquiries she was told 'nothing was wanted,' my mother again withdrew; but after consulting with my father, they determined to remain up, for such things were not in the usual manner of happening in their house. So my mother stationed herself within call. My father, somewhat alarmed, and determined to be ready, in case of necessity, drew a chair before the fire, deciding to rest in that manner, first taking the precaution to leave open all the doors leading to that portion of the house in which were the travellers.

"At that time there lived in the house you have observed by the wayside, a gentleman by the name of Kirby. He had bought the place some years previously. It had long been unoccupied then. Few ever saw and none knew him, except Sir John Carleton, who frequently went there, though his visits were never returned. He is thought to have known much more of Mr. Kirby than he ever divulged.

"Sir John has lived much abroad since then, but is now at his seat, Carleton Park, just outside the village, and, I am told, intends to remain. As soon after his purchase as the grounds could be put in order, and the

house arranged, Mr. Kirby came down, and none ever saw him outside the walls again, though when I was a boy I have been on the high bluffs to the westward, and seen him pacing the flagged walk on that side, up and down, the same even gait, without rest, until I became tired of looking, and turned away. I have been there since, and have seen where his constant march had worn a depression the whole length of the flags. He lived most economically, keeping but two servants, one of whom came regularly to the market then held here, and bought sparingly, but never was his master known to have a bill sent in. Some said he was rich, others that he was reduced, whilst some contended he was hoarding up untold wealth. I know not how true these may have been, but certain no one in distress ever came from his door empty-handed.

“Well, sir, as I was saying, my father determined to be on the alert, but the warmth of the fire, and it may be a mug or two of ale with which he comforted himself, tended to make him drowsy, and at last fall into a doze. From this he was suddenly awakened by screams and piercing shrieks emanating from the guests’ chamber. Thoroughly aroused, he ran hastily to the door, where he found my mother had preceded him, and demanded admittance. By this time the cries had ceased, and were succeeded by a succession of low moans. The door being fastened, and receiving no reply, my father placed his shoulder against and burst it open. On the bed lay the poor lady, unconscious,

her face livid and throat bruised and swollen, showing the black marks of finger prints, whilst on the table was an empty flask.

“The man, though unsteady from the effects of liquor, advanced with uplifted arm, every feature bearing a look of baffled rage. My father, who was a powerful man, caught him in his strong hands and pushed him down into a seat, when he told him if he moved but a muscle he would break every bone in his body.

“In the meantime my mother, with the help of the maids, who had flocked to the scene, tried to resuscitate the lady, and seeing that a certain event was about to take place, dispatched a messenger for a physician, whilst the gentleman, stupefied from drink, was taken to another portion of the house and placed under the watch of one of the stable men.

“It was not a great while before the lady returned to consciousness. My mother tried to soothe and ease her pains, but in a low, plaintive voice she only asked, ‘where is my father? send for my father.’ This rather bewildered my mother, for she knew the folks hereabout, high and low, and was puzzled to know what to do, and thought the poor thing’s mind was wandering; but when she repeatedly made the same request, she thought there must be something in it, so in a quiet moment softly said, ‘where does he live? what is his name?’ The almost inaudible answer came back, ‘Philip Kirby, Lonedrear House.’ You may imagine my mother’s astonishment.

“It was now past midnight, but a gig was sent for the purpose.

“Mean time the doctor came, and with his assistance the lady gave birth, prematurely, to a boy, just after which Mr. Kirby made his appearance in the chamber. His features were pale, but, quickly approaching the bedside, he looked down upon the white face, and bending his head over it, his eyes filled with tears as he whispered, ‘My daughter!’ Immediately her eyes opened, bright with expectation, and clasping her arms tightly around his neck, she drew him down and kissed him repeatedly, saying, ‘My father; my dear father! I have so longed to see you once before I died, and God has answered my prayer!’

“‘Oh, my child! my child!’ he said, ‘do not speak of death; there is hope yet!’

“‘No, no, father, I feel it on me now. I would I could say more, after all these years of separation, and oh, you loved me so well, and have so much to forgive. My baby, my own child, which I have just seen, which I have prayed for and longed for during my unhappy life, promise that you will take it. This is my last, my only request. You cannot, you will not refuse!’

“‘My child, was there aught I ever refused you, except the choice of your unhappy marriage? Rest content, but live yourself; live for your own precious charge, and so long as you are under my roof, I will protect you against the world!’

“‘Too late! too late! I can see it all now. Too late! too late!’

“Mr. Kirby turned from the bed; the physician gently led him away. It was indeed too late, for with those words she had expired.

“As the twain entered the long passage, it was now near morning. They met the husband, who had slept off the effects of drink, but whose countenance still bore a hellish expression, and having overcome the hostler was wandering back.

“When Mr. Kirby first saw him, he shrank back as though from a serpent, pushing off his presence.

“‘Ah, you recognize me?’ said the brute. ‘I am glad of that, for you know what I want—money—which you have in heaps, and which I want so much. Why did you not send us money? why did you compel us, from our very necessities, to come here? Gold! gold! man, is what I want, and gold I will have—I *will* have! Do you hear?’

“Mr. Kirby’s nerves seemed to strengthen palpably, as he replied:

“‘Mathew Matherton—liar, scoundrel, gambler that you have always been, worse than all you are now—the murderer of my child, my poor child!’ Here he broke down.

“In a moment there were a dozen pairs of strong hands upon him, for the people in the town had heard of the night’s proceedings, and gathered in and around the house—some from curiosity, some from sympathy. Sir John Carleton, for whom Mr. Kirby had sent when first apprised of his daughter’s whereabouts, arriving at

this timely moment, after hearing the statements of those around, being a magistrate, committed the husband to prison.

“The culprit was at first shocked upon hearing of his wife’s death, for he had not realized it was so bad; but after that momentary feeling, a stolid indifference took possession of him, which he maintained through all his trouble.

“That, sir, is the history of that fatal night. I was but nine or ten years old, but have an indistinct recollection of the men who came upon the coroner’s jury, and how the lady was taken to London to be buried. From that time, thirty years ago, Lonedrear House has never been occupied.

“Mr. Kirby left with the child, his own servant—a respectable looking one she was—taking charge of it, and with, perhaps, the exception of Sir John, no one in Wentworth has ever heard more of them since.

“The old gentleman thanked my father and mother in his quiet, gentle way for their trouble, and afterwards sent a handsome present, which would have more than ten times rewarded them.

“The trial of Mathew Matherton is remembered by many people in this county. Mr. Kirby would have proved a most important witness, but his attendance could not be procured, as he had left the country; but, even in the absence of such evidence, the prisoner was convicted, though, by some technicality, sentenced only to transportation, from which it was said he afterwards

escaped. Of this I heard no more than the idle rumor. After his receiving judgment, the crowd so yelled and hooted and tried to get hold of him, that it required a sheriff's guard to see him safely back to Derby jail.

"This, sir, is all that I know, and my story has got through just as we have reached (*he* had reached, would have been better) the last mug of ale. We will drink this, and then I must say good night—for the hour is late—and if you will allow me, show you to your room."

And the Innkeeper turned his eyes from the bottom of the tankard to the stranger opposite, who, his brow still buried in his hand, seemed lost in a far away reverie. Presently, he arose mechanically and signified his readiness to follow.

The landlord led the way up a winding flight of stairs, and, turning suddenly to the right, ushered him into a large room, in a corner of which stood a high bedstead, while opposite was a great oaken press. Chairs and a table stood in the centre, and further across, a casement opening upon a hanging balcony.

The guest paused. "Is this your best room?"

"Yes, sir, and you will find it very comfortable. I'll be bound you'll sleep well in *that* bed," giving it a push, to show its softness.

"Is this the—the room in which—the room of which you were speaking?"

"Yes," said the other, hesitatingly. "'Tis the best in the house. But, if you do not fancy it, another can be prepared in a few minutes."

The guest looked around—at the ceiling, the furniture, the closed casement. A shudder seemed to pass over his whole frame.

“I would prefer to sleep in the room below—that we have just left. The fire burns brightly there, and the sofa is a good enough bed. I’ve often had worse,” and he commenced retracing his steps.

Thomas Spiggott protested against such discomfort, but said, if it pleased his guest, he “was satisfied,” and, after re-conducting him back, replenished the grate with fuel and turned to see if anything more was needed.

At this moment, a louder, harsher blast than had yet blown struck the house, and, penetrating each crevice and cranney, seemed to shake the building to its foundation, rattling the doors and windows as though they were playthings in the hands of a mighty giant.

The casement of the room in which the two men were was blown violently back, and in the aperture they distinctly saw the head of an old man, his long white hair and beard clinging around his shoulders, wet from the storm—a diabolical expression upon his countenance—but as suddenly as it appeared it vanished.

Spiggott covered his face with his hands, whilst the other rushed forward, but, as before, was met only by the wind and the rain. He peered out into the deep darkness, but nothing could be discerned, and, grasping the arm of the Innkeeper, cried, “Come, let us go

out; let us examine." This they did, but, although searching up and down and in every conceivable direction in which a person could have gone, naught did they discover.

After securing the doors and seeing everything fast, both retired their separate ways—Spiggott to bed, muttering about ghosts and devils, whilst the other to muse and brood over sad, unpleasant thoughts; and the gray light had appeared before he lay down to rest.

CHAPTER III.

THE ACCIDENT.

ON the morrow, the sun shone forth in all its splendor, bathing the earth in one vast sea of light. Toward morning the sky had cleared, the wind ceased, and a half hour's freezing hardened the crust of the earth's surface, upon which rested the white, hoar frost, now being fast dispelled.

The traveller arose, and, after making a hasty toilet and breakfasting, with Dolly again as his attendant, sallied forth to the front of the house, where the landlord was discussing the incidents and effects of last night's storm with the towns-people. Rufus Applegarth, for such he had written his name, bade him good morning and inquired "how he had rested?"

"It was a strange night, sir, a strange night," Spiggott replied. "I slept but ill. And they tell me that lights were seen in Lonedrear House last night. God only knows what it means. I have questioned if any one has seen a strange man about, but it seems not. I know not what all this portends, but it will have some fearful ending, depend upon it."

The stranger, apparently indifferent, listened awhile to the village gossip and then inquired the way to Sir John Carleton's.

"Do you want to see Sir John?" Spiggott asked, in a perplexed way, looking intently at the guest. "All you have to do is keep straight down the road until you come to the bend, just beyond the brook, and then you will see a gateway. But here comes Mr. Leslie, and as it is in his direction, he will show it to you."

The Rev. Hugh Leslie was the Rector of the Parish—a tall, fine-looking, elderly gentleman—who took care, as much in a plain, practical, common sense way, of the souls committed to his care as by preaching and exhorting. He was beloved by his parishioners, poor and rich, and was ever ready to help, not only with his purse, but with hand and counsel, those who stood in need.

Mr. Leslie had been taking his morning walk, for he was fond of manly exercise, and was now returning, the ground passing swiftly beneath his rapid strides.

"Well, Thomas, what's the matter now?" he said, addressing the Innkeeper; and, observing the little group about the hotel, "the storm done you any damage?"

"No," replied Spiggott, "though it was rough weather. But they tell me lights were moving in Lonedrear House, and I saw something strange myself, as this gentleman will testify;" and, turning to him, added, "he desires to see Sir John, and I thought, as it's your way, you would show the road, though it couldn't well be missed."

Mr. Leslie raised his hat politely to the stranger,

saying: "It will give me pleasure, sir, to accompany you." And then to Spiggott, as the two moved off, "Ah, Thomas, I am afraid that your superstitious fears sometimes get the better of your sound judgment. You may depend there are causes for these things that will be explained some day, and then you will laugh at your idle fancies."

"Please God, sir, I hope it may be," cried the other after him, with a strong suspicion, however, to the contrary. "I've tried to do honest by all men, and I trust the goblins will let me alone."

"Spiggott is superstitious," said the Rector, as he and Rufus Applegarth walked off; "but it is passing strange how the lights he speaks of appear and disappear in what they term 'the haunted house.' I suppose he has told you about it?" glancing at his companion.

"Yes, he gave me the history last night," replied the other, slowly, as though one might take it as they chose, whether he believed it or not.

"It is queer," kept on the Rector; "for some years these lights have been seen at odd intervals, and though several times we have visited the house after their occurrence, have never discovered anything to intimate that any one had been there. I suppose there are natural causes for it, which may at present seem mysterious. My own idea is that some unknown person visits the place, but it is scarcely worth while to vent my views, as I have no doubt Thomas has given you quite a

surfeit of it;" adding, as they reached a little eminence, "isn't this a pretty bit of scenery? And there is Sir John's entrance."

Rufus Applegarth looked up. Not far to his left was a gateway, with its neat porter's lodge—the entrance to Carleton Park. Some distance in front, rising majestically along the brow of a gently sloping hill, offering ample space for an extended lawn, was a grand mass of building, with towers and turrets, arched portals, columns and mullioned windows, stretching its length against a back-ground of ancient oaks and dark evergreen foliage.

The structure, originally of granite, had turned a grayish white from centuries of exposure. The different periods of its construction could be plainly told—some Elizabethian, some Tudor, others of more modern date. On the right were the terraced gardens, with green-houses, graperies and fountains; whilst in the rear, plainly shining through the branches of the trees, were the long lines of stable roofing.

"What place is that?" said he, motioning in the direction.

"That is Maurland Towers," replied the Rector. "It is said to be one of the handsomest places in our country, as you may well see; and," turning, "this more humble spot is the Rectory, at which, if you make any stay in our midst, I should be glad to see you."

On a path leading back from the road stood the

Parsonage, with some pretty little grounds attached, and adjoining them was the Church, with its sad array of yew trees and stones around.

The Rector held out his friendly hand.

"I am obliged to you," said his companion, coloring and hesitating. "I have only come to see Sir John and do not expect to stay, but if opportunity should allow, I shall be glad to avail myself of it;" and so they parted.

Rufus Applegarth inquired of the woman whom he found at the gate of the lodge whether "Sir John were home?"

She opened but a small aperture, seeming loth to let any one in.

"Yes, he is home. Do you want to see him particularly?"

"Yes, I must see him."

"Sir John is not well and does not care to receive any one, unless it is for something important."

"Mine is important business—at least to me."

The gate had opened no wider yet.

At this moment a gentleman came up behind the portress, dressed in a full suit of black—coat, vest, pantaloons, gaiters, hat and neckerchief—all sad-colored, except his spotless shirt front and gold-rimmed eye-glasses, which dangled from his neck by a narrow black ribbon. The woman, as he approached, courteseyed low and stretched the gate wide for his egress.

Rufus Applegarth stepped aside to allow him to pass.

This attracted the gentleman's attention, and seeing evidently a stranger, he spoke.

"Do you wish an interview with Sir John Carleton?"

"Yes, very much."

The gentleman eyed him closely. "Anything in the way of business?"

"Yes — no — not exactly. Private matters, I may say."

The gentleman still scrutinized him. "If it is anything in regard to the estate, I am his man of business."

"Nothing of that kind, but I am sure he will see me."

"Sir John is not in the habit of receiving many persons, but if you desire" — motioning the gate to be opened — "you will find him in the park, near the house." So saying, he went on.

Rufus Applegarth passed on along a winding avenue, with overhanging elms. The white graveled walk was strewn with dead branches and withered leaves, swept there by the storm. Men were busy in different places gathering up the debris, whilst here and there could be seen deer, as they darted in and out among the trees or grazed warily in the open glades. A turn of the path brought the house in view — a square, tall mansion, almost monumental in its proportions, impressing one with the idea of a dangerous place in case of fire.

Carleton Park was not a great landed estate, though ample in its dimensions. The owner had lived much

abroad—almost the whole portion of his later life. He had inherited, besides the Baronetcy and his present mansion, a strictly entailed barren estate in Wales. Being of an energetic and determined will, he had succeeded in discovering rich minerals in the heretofore sterile soil, and applying to these, besides ordinary appliances, contrivances which he originated, the results were wonderful, and his great wealth was soon noised abroad. Kind and generous in disposition, he gave away lavishly, while his chief enjoyment was in ferretting out the secrets of scientific pursuits.

He had had a younger brother who, bright in intellect and full of youthful spirits, had taken the highest honors at the University, and started out with a brilliant future. Although not entitled to any part of the estate, Sir John, who loved him with more than a brother's love, had showered wealth upon him.

In an evil day in the midst of his career, the pretty face and foot of a not too celebrated French actress captivated his fancy, and from that hour his ruin began.

Sir John, deep in his own occupations did not hear of the marriage until some time had elapsed, when his anger was first aroused, and, that over, he tried by every endeavor to lessen the catastrophe, giving them ample means and using every inducement to live a refined and happy existence, but the attractions of a public life were too great, and after pining some time for her former pleasures and excitements her wishes took active shape in a return to the stage, and her old associations.

Disgusted with these, but with a fatal infatuation, her husband fell into bad habits and became accustomed to his previous antipathies, going from bad to worse until only a drunkard's fate awaited him.

A few more years of restlessness abroad, and Sir John, in low spirits and worse health, had returned with his only child — a daughter — to Carleton Park, there to live in rest and retirement.

As Rufus Applegarth came nearer the house he caught a glimpse of two persons walking upon the lawn — one a gentleman leaning gently upon the arm of a young girl. Conjecturing it must be they whom he sought, he walked directly across in the direction of the receding figures.

A few moments' rapid motion brought him again within sight of his search, not far distant. The elder person had taken a seat upon a rustic bench and was talking pleasantly to the fair girl who stood in front, her gaze, perhaps, following her thoughts into the far distance of time. As the new comer approached, the noise made of the crunching of his shoes upon the hard ground attracted the attention of those before him.

"Have I the honor of speaking to Sir John Carleton?"

"You have, sir," said the Baronet, rising with some little difficulty, and with the assistance of his youthful companion. "Excuse my slowness of motion, a man's will may travel much faster than his bodily ailments will allow."

"I, sir," and Rufus Applegarth lowered his voice — which seemed strangely broken — "am Philip Kirby, I wrote to you from America and you were pleased to send me so kind a reply."

"Philip Kirby," said Sir John, extending his hand, "that name brings back a host of recollections. So you are the grandson of Philip Kirby, of Lonedrear House?"

"Yes, Sir John, the grandson of him who dwelt at Lonedrear House, but for reasons which I will hereafter explain, I have chosen to adopt the name of Rufus Applegarth, by which you would do a kindness to call me."

"As you may please, sir. I have no doubt your reasons are good. I knew your grandfather well — though my senior by many years — and had a great friendship for him. I am glad to see you. Let us walk to the house, for by the tenor of your letter there will be many things you desire to know, but," and looking round and recalling her to his side, for she had wandered some little distance apart at the stranger's first appearance, "let me first make known to you my daughter Lucille."

As she advanced, turning her head to the stranger with a courteous bow, she presented one of those sweet types of beauty which linger in the memory rather as an ideal or imagination than a reality. Gentle hazel eyes, with a wealth of wavy chestnut hair, and that lovely color in her cheeks like the scarlet leaves around

her. Lithe in figure, every movement denoting grace and refinement, youth budding into womanhood, Rufus Applegarth had never seen a fairer picture.

As they approached the portico with its marble pillars, the merry sound of the huntsman's horn with the cry of the hounds was heard; and casting their eyes in that direction they saw in the level meadows below the field sweep by in full view of the chase.

Sir John's blood seemed to tingle with excitement as he exclaimed: "What fine sport! When I was young, with all my occupations, I found time to hunt," and then, more slowly, "but my hunting days are over, and my only but greater joy than all is in my child," and he affectionately pressed his hand upon her.

The fox went swiftly along, taking without pause the fences, hedges and ditches which obstructed his course. Without a fault the hounds followed close in the rear; behind these came first a strong-limbed, full-blooded hunter, bearing a master whose steady seat and carriage bespoke the brave and fearless rider. Horse and rider cleared with ease each impediment as it arose, whilst those still further back sought breaks in the hedges and narrow places in the ditches.

"That is certainly a bold one in the lead," said Sir John, alluding to the foremost horseman, "see how he takes that hedge, no stop, no hesitation; but the wily villain Reynard has swerved and is making for the stone wall and great ditch. I warrant that will give them trouble, and the hindmost has a fair chance to

come in first, if they will but turn and go through yonder gate; but that first one, seems to be following directly in the trail, really he will never attempt *that* leap."

The rider, who had been keeping the lead evidently intended to do so, and went straight at the wall, not knowing the danger upon the other side, perhaps not caring. His horse — noble animal — never faltered, but rose in the air and shot like an arrow over the impediment, struck the bank with full force, rolled over, and fell hard upon his rider.

It was with terror that the party upon the lawn viewed this scene, and at its conclusion with exclamations of horror hastened to the place of accident. The other hunters seeing the advantages, as Sir John had predicted, turned, and thus had not witnessed the disaster, being entirely out of sight.

Rufus Applegarth arrived at the injured man's side some moments before the others, and quickly unloosed his coat and vest. He had struck against a sharp stone, and the heavy weight of the horse had sent its edges into the flesh, making an ugly wound.

Lucille Carleton saw a handsome pale face and motionless figure stretched upon the earth, and turned her face away; Sir John stooped down to assist.

"Is he much hurt?"

"Not seriously, I hope," said Applegarth, closely inspecting.

"We must have help and a physician immediately," said Sir John, as he arose to carry out his intentions.

"I am a surgeon," replied the other, "and I could manage very well if I had a strong, wide bandage, but I should have it at once," a thought striking him, "if the lady—it is a case of absolute necessity, of life, or death, if delayed—would let me have a wrapping."

Sir John turned to his daughter; in a moment a light shawl of finest fibre was placed in his hands.

"Now," said he, at the same time tearing and adjusting the garment to the proper dimensions, "please wet your handkerchief in the stream and hand it to me."

Lucille was before her father, and quickly dipping her own as well as his into the water, passed them to him.

"That will do," said Applegarth. After applying them, he bound the improvised bandage tightly over the cut. "There, you see it has stopped the bleeding, which is all that is requisite."

By this time the laborers in the park had reached the scene. "Take him in your arms," commanded the Baronet. "There, easily, not so fast, and bear him to the hall." The others followed.

"Do you know who he is?"

"Yes, it is Lord Saint Maur."

"Of Maurland Towers?"

"Yes; I suppose you saw the place upon entering."

"It was pointed out to me."

"I only know him by sight," said Sir John. "During my long absence, the younger people have grown out of my knowledge. I have learned that, for one so

young, he is becoming quite prominent, both in political and literary fame. He can scarcely be more than five and twenty."

They had reached the hall and the still unconscious form was laid gently upon a lounge. Brandy was brought and the surgeon placing it to the young man's lips, succeeded in making him swallow a little. This had the desired effect and he slowly opened his eyes.

Lucille, rarely meeting gentlemen — for her father in his retirement cast his own exclusiveness around her, and undivided in his love, would not have parted with her, even though royalty had offered — saw the pale exhausted face, with brown curling locks surrounding a fair forehead, a sweet, almost womanish mouth, the lips partly opened. There were few handsomer men of that clear aristocratic cast of features than Erroll, Lord St. Maur, of Maurland Towers.

Left at an early age "lord of himself, that heritage of woe," he probably had, by following his own inclinations and tastes, made a more prominent mark than if he were under the tutelage of others.

Maurland Towers was one of — if not the greatest — landed estate in the county. Its possessor endeared himself to those he came in contact with; and beloved by his tenants, popular in society, popular among men of his own class, his friendship and acquaintance were eagerly sought. Though not a society man, he would listen patiently to those who expound their views as standard, yet if a question arose, his opinion, always

given in a frank and kindly manner, without egotism or vanity, was usually regarded as final authority.

Among his own sex he was manly; with women he possessed that gentleness which made each his champion.

Having taken and occupied with interest and advantage, the hereditary seat of the St. Maurs in "The Lords," he had been at first caught at by the dominant party, for his family prestige and political influence; but afterward was looked up to and applauded for his sound sense and brilliancy of intellect, and ere long was identified as one of the leading spirits among the older and more prominent statesmen.

On opening his eyes for the first time, since the accident, his senses and vision first took in the object of the fair girl some few steps from him. Bewildered in regard to other things, not knowing where, or how he was, he gazed at the sweet face before him and the impression stamped then upon his heart and soul was never erased. Seeing others around he tried to rise, but fell helplessly back.

"Where am I? I am hurt."

"You have fallen from your horse and are at Carleton Park."

"Yes, I remember; I fell," he said faintly. "Am I much hurt? I only feel weak."

"No," said Rufus Applegarth, "only a good shaking up," not caring to say it was worse, "but you must keep very quiet."

"Thank you," he answered, and was still for a few

minutes. Then trying to rise again and casting his eyes where Lucille had been standing, but withdrawn, as also Sir John, and sinking back breathless, he asked:

“Was there not a lady there just now — who was it?”

“Miss Carleton was there.”

“Miss Carleton?” he repeated, and then was perfectly quiet.

Sir John returned with Mrs. Simpson, the house-keeper, who brought an anodyne which Applegarth administered, saying: “You must try and rest now, just where you are, it is the best for you.”

In a few minutes a deep sleep had taken possession of him, and during this, he was carefully conveyed to a more fitting resting place.

“Yours was a fortunate and timely arrival,” said Sir John, as they stood, a few minutes later, discussing the affair. “I am sure you have done his lordship a great service.”

“It was not a difficult feat,” the other replied. “I observed, from the profuse flow of blood, that a vessel was in some way pierced, or slightly opened, and I simply required a wide, strong bandage, which had the effect of bringing the parts tightly together.”

“I am glad it is no worse,” continued Sir John. “When I first saw him, I thought it was beyond repair.” And then hurriedly, as though he had neglected something: “You must let me send to the inn for your luggage.”

“I am afraid I cannot stay longer than to have some

conversation with you in regard to — past events.” This was spoken slowly, as if the utterer, relieved for a time, had returned to a sad and unpleasant train of thought. “Besides, I have some one in London under my protection — a young lady — in my charge, from America, destined to a home among relatives here. They were absent upon my arrival, and not being able to restrain my impatience, I left, but desire to return as quickly as possible.”

“I am grieved to hear it, for my associations with your grandfather make me feel a more than ordinary interest in yourself. When do you expect these people to return?”

“In a few days at farthest.”

“Then I will send for your portmanteau, for surely you can spare a day, and so short a time can make but little difference to your *protégée*. Come, I will accept of no excuse.”

Having given the necessary orders, he added:

“Later, I want to show you my laboratory. Your grandfather was the first to lead my mind in that direction, and I have to thank him for many pleasant hours in searching its mysteries; but at present, I must rest. I trust, when we meet at dinner, you will have a good account to give of your patient.”

So saying, he withdrew, while Rufus Applegarth found his time pass quickly, examining the grounds, inspecting the extensive library, and paying the required attention to the invalid.

CHAPTER IV.

AUDLEY TREVELLYAN, THE GUARDSMAN.

NOT until later on the following day, did Rufus Applegarth see the Baronet. The unusual exercise had exhausted his by no means strong constitution, and confined him to his room. The guest, each time receiving messages of excuse and apology, had taken his meals alone. Lucille seldom made an appearance during the stay of her father's infrequent visitors, and it was not until after he had breakfasted and was strolling in one of the winding walks, that he came suddenly upon her. She had evidently been walking rapidly, as her face indicated, being suffused with a lovely glow.

"Good-morning, Miss Carleton," said he. "We are evidently bent upon the same errand—a quest for fresh air."

"Yes; I have been walking, but not far. How is Lord St. Maur?"

"Much better, though he had a restless night. I have to thank some one for having every thing prepared as it was needed."

And he had indistinct visions of a figure very much like the one before him, flitting outside the door and in the long corridor, during his visits to the room of his

patient. If anything, the color at first observed, became deeper and mounted higher.

"Mrs. Simpson, though aged, is very thoughtful," she replied; "and an occasion of this kind is an excellent opportunity for the display of not only her good, but greatly to her delight, active qualities. I suppose there is no real danger now?"

"No;" wheeling round and commencing his return with her; "the only thing we have to guard against is inflammation; but such things are not pleasant to gentle ears. Surgeons soon become accustomed to suffering, pain and death, and though having as tender feelings as others, it would be madness to let them have sway. We look upon it wholly in a practical light, and pursue those methods which the occasion requires. If we allow emotional feelings to usurp our professional judgment, and interfere with cool action, it is far worse for the sufferer. In America, from which I have recently come, I was stationed in the vicinity of a great public improvement, where accidents are of daily occurrence, and I gained knowledge in perhaps the best of all schools — actual work. I only say this, that you might have the more confidence in my dealing with the present case;" and laughing, "professional men are only too glad of lauding their own vocation, when opportunity occurs and a willing audience attained."

"Oh, no; I am much interested in what you say. Although enduring scenes of suffering, that he may

gather experience, yet I have always looked upon a good physician as a good angel, bringing comfort and joy by healing the sick and soothing pain. A good physician should be the most praised and loved of all men."

"I am glad to hear Miss Carleton speak so enthusiastically; it is seldom we get so much praise. Few of us ever rise to eminence, or fortune; the best years of our lives are passed in learning, and when we have arrived at an advanced stage, and think we are about to master the science, the evil, so often warded from others, claims us for its own. You see, when we commence to talk, 'shop,'" he continued, laughing, "we will discourse and lecture to any extent permitted." And they entered the hall together.

Lucille passed into the morning room. This was a large apartment filled with ornaments and handsome pictures. The shutters had been but partly opened, causing the light to enter in narrow straggling rays, leaving places in deepened shadow. Picking up a book, she sat silently looking over the pages, probably unconscious of either its title, or contents, as the leaves were not turned, until startled by a slight noise close by. She looked up and met the glance of St. Maur, still pale, still handsome. The blood came and went in her cheek; she started as if to retire, then checked herself.

"I hope I am not disturbing Miss Carleton," he said, apologetically. "Meeting no one, I wandered in here, attracted by the pictures."

"Not in the least," she replied, recovering her composure; "but I was surprised to see you out so soon."

"I feel quite strong. The surgeon who has been so kind, tells me that I will regain my strength rapidly. I might say it was only a fainting spell, or extended weakness. I am sorry to have given so much trouble."

"Hardly trouble," she replied. "It is a great sensibility of thankfulness to find you have escaped so lightly."

St. Maur looked at her fervently for a moment. What strange thrill was this coursing through his veins! What fire of ecstasy leaping in his heart and brain! It had never been there before.

"Miss Carleton can scarcely know how deeply grateful I am for her solicitude. I shall ever hereafter take my fall as a lucky event, since it has won such sympathy." The color again mounted to her cheek, which noticing, he added quickly: "I only spoke as I felt; forgive me if you misconstrue it for flattery."

It was spoken so earnestly and with a gleaming light in the clear eye, that as glancing up, she met his gaze, there was naught else needed in vindication. She simply said, rising:

"I fear you overrate your strength, and I will not add encouragement by making you talk —"

"I can assure you, I never was better in my life," he cried, eagerly, almost pleadingly. "Do tell me where this picture was taken!"

And surely there was no sign of illness or fatigue,

as he stood erect and graceful before her, holding out this straw of hope for detention, and pointing to a portrait of herself, which Sir John had taken great pride in having so successfully accomplished, by a foreign artist; a beautiful picture indeed.

"It was taken abroad," she replied, smiling faintly. "In Dusseldorf, I think."

"It is lovely," he breathed, absently. "Lovely, but," comparing it with the real face, "not so fair as the original."

"There is papa now," she exclaimed, hearing his voice. "He does not know of your coming down."

And seizing upon this hasty excuse for escape, she went into the hall, but stopped suddenly, confronting two dilemmas, neither wishing to advance, nor daring to retreat. Sir John was standing in the midst, talking to a gentleman, evidently a new acquaintance, as he still held the card of introduction in his hand.

"I wrote to say that I was coming down to-day," the stranger was saying, addressing the Baronet, "and thought something was wrong, when I found no conveyance at the inn, and upon making enquiry, was told of his accident."

The speaker was a tall, full-bearded, raw-boned fellow, with clear, blue eyes, and a smile always lingering about the mouth. This was Captain Audley Trevellyan, of the Guards.

St. Maur and he had from childhood been the best and warmest friends; a friendship which, as they

became older, was based upon that firmest of foundations — mutual respect and esteem.

Trevellyan, aside from his mother and sisters, possessed a small income, to which being added the army pay, allowed him to live in an independent, easy, if not luxurious style. As his military duties were neither arduous nor confining, the uninterrupted association the two had enjoyed, was scarcely infringed upon.

When St. Maur was in town, occupying his seat in the Lords during the season, outside of its sessions at the clubs, operas, or entertainments, they were seldom seen apart. Either would have gone any length for the other, never thinking of professing or displaying, yet by every act and word, revealing it.

The Guardsman was full of fun and frolic. There was not a dignified bone in his body. Ready to sing a song, flirt, dance, or drink a glass with his comrades; yet those who knew him best, never dared to go beyond a limit where good breeding ceased. Like unto St. Maur, he was sought after, and was a thorough favorite, even more so than his friend, who possessed a cold reserve, which was with many an impassable barrier; whilst the former had only his kind heart and good nature to recommend him. Entirely unselfish, he would put himself to any inconvenience to oblige, and for the asking would lend more than his last pound by the use of his signature, keeping within reasonable bound, and should he suffer by the act, would deny himself in other ways to repair the loss.

"I have not seen him as yet to-day," responded the Baronet to his visitor's enquiry, "but here is Dr. Applegarth;" who approached. "He can let us know."

"He spoke of getting up this morning, though I tried to dissuade him," said the person addressed. "However, the night being passed, he need anticipate no further trouble; it was simply the opening of an artery, prostration naturally following."

Here Lucille came diffidently to her father's side, sliding her hand in his: "I suppose you are speaking of Lord St. Maur; he is in the morning room."

Captain Trevellyan, engrossed by the surgeon's account, caught an indistinct meaning and glimpse of this half side play.

"You will find him in the morning room, Captain Trevellyan, said Sir John, pointing to it. "He seems to have violated your persuasions."

Trevellyan entered the designated room. St. Maur, chagrined at the fleeting of his pretty vision, had taken up the discarded volume, and, like its recent holder, his thoughts were evidently not upon the pages; so much was he engrossed, that he had not heard the other's voice, and only observed his close presence.

"Erroll, what's all this I hear of your being hurt?"

"Why, Trevellyan, how glad I am to see you. By the way, I had forgotten you were coming down to-day." And the two friends shook hands.

"A nice mess you've made of it," said the Guardsman, trying to conceal in a bluff mode of speaking, the

tender sympathy underneath. "You always were a fortunate fellow though, and never more in luck than this time. It's a wonder you weren't killed."

"It was a pretty hard fall, and I feel aches and pains all over; but I've sent for the carriage, I don't want to be more of a nuisance here than I can help, and, you can assist me, should I require it. Where shall I find Sir John, to take my leave and thank him for his kindness?"

"He was out here a moment ago," said the Captain, examining the hall, but his search was not verified. "Better ring the bell and summon a servant; that's the quickest." And he accordingly touched the tassel.

"Will you tell Sir John Carleton," said St. Maur, speaking to the attending domestic, "that I am about to take my leave, and would desire to present my thanks in person, before departing."

Instead of the servant, Rufus Applegarth returned, saying: "Sir John requests me to offer his apology; that you will excuse his apparent want of courtesy in not seeing you off, but he would avoid any further effort or exertion."

"Please tell him," said St. Maur, "how sorry I am to be partly, if not wholly, the cause of his indisposition. To you, I owe my warmest thanks, if not my life. I would there were some way I might show my gratitude."

"My doing a kindness, or being of service to one of my fellow-beings, is a sufficiently gratifying thought I assure you," was the courteous response.

"I hope you will let me see you at Maurland Towers," said St. Maur, slightly embarrassed; "for surely our acquaintance must not end here."

"Thank you, and should I remain in the neighborhood longer than I at present expect, I will be glad to avail myself of your kind invitation, but my stay is very limited."

St. Maur, assisted by Trevellyan, entered the carriage. He had lingered longer than necessary, in hopes of catching a last glimpse of his sweet ideal picture, but no glance rewarded him, and he had to succumb to Trevellyan's third query of "what he was waiting for?" Once in the vehicle, his friend questioned: "Who is that surgeon?"

"An American, I believe."

"A rather queer sort of fellow, I take it, though I confess I was favorably impressed with him."

"Yes, he was very kind and gentle with me. I cannot offer friendship, his manner repels it; and yet I should like to know him farther. He has a preoccupied, absent air I do not quite understand."

"And the Baronet," said the other, "I've often heard of, but never seen him before."

"I scarcely met him."

"I think I observed a young lady too."

"Miss Carleton, I believe; but how did you hear I was hurt?"

So the last subject of conversation took an unnoticed but abrupt turn, and was not alluded to again.

CHAPTER V.

SIR JOHN CARLETON.

“**A**RE they off?” said Sir John to Applegarth, and then returned to the library, carefully closing the door.

“Yes, they are gone, leaving thanks and regrets.”

“I have an aversion to receiving strangers. I cannot tell why, but it grows upon me. More habit, I suppose, than anything else. But to return to our subject. I hardly know how to begin to tell you of those things, which I know instinctively you desire to hear. As I am not aware of your past history, of how far your knowledge goes in regard to these events, or of how much your grandfather imparted to you, it would be better if you gave me some data or slight *resumé* of your life. It might, perhaps, avoid painful recitals; and then I can take up the threads and join them together, so as to make all plain and intelligible. I must tell you it is with great reluctance I enter upon this narration, as I cannot see the good to be derived, and it will cause unnecessary pain.”

“It is my urgent request that you will tell me all, concealing nothing. It is not curiosity that prompts this, but a feeling I cannot overcome—a something which impels me on to a fate that is at present

shrouded in darkness, but which I am convinced will work itself out for good or evil. I, therefore, beg of you to let me hear all."

"As I said in my reply to your letter," returned Sir John, "it is for you to choose. If you demand, I will comply, however reluctantly."

"Then, sir, I will accept of your suggestion, which is wise, and will begin by saying that my earliest recollections are connected with a small cottage on a broad street or roadway in one of the smaller American villages. Here my grandfather lived in the utmost retirement, keeping two servants, a man and a woman, who had followed him from this country—living in a style which denoted respectability, but economy. He instructed me until I was, perhaps, ten or twelve years old. Then there came a very hard winter, the snow lying deep during the whole season. Being unaccustomed to living in so severe a climate, and the framed dwelling being cold—for in that district we had only wood to burn—he was taken ill, and, after lingering some weeks, died.

"The physician of the village was an educated gentleman and, outside of his professional hours, frequently visited our house, finding my grandfather one of the few with whom he could congenially converse. He attended him faithfully in his last illness; and my own helpless condition preying much upon my grandfather's mind, he left his affairs in the hands of this gentleman, as also the charge of myself. Dr. Applegarth, whose

name I have assumed, was a bachelor, but took me to his house, and was ever after the kindest of friends. The two servants were provided for, but they were old and soon passed away.

“My guardian and friend brought me up to the study of his own profession, and in after years, little by little, installed me into his practice. It seems he knew nothing of my grandfather's antecedents, being too courteous to seek a confidence, and the other was reticent.

“Upon his dying bed my grandfather left for me a chest containing papers, memoranda, and some few valuable souvenirs. Dr. Applegarth had looked into these, and concluding from their contents it would but cause sorrow, refrained from giving them to me. It was not until his death that I came into possession of such facts as I have. Up to that time I was in ignorance of whom my father was, and had never dreamed there were such secrets in existence as the box contained. I do not reproach my friend for their concealment—he acted as he thought for the best. Having no relatives, he left me all he was possessed of—a comfortable maintenance.

“In looking over his effects I came across the chest, and, upon opening it, found bundles of old letters, miniatures and ancient keepsakes. Studying these out, I discovered my parentage, and last I found a bundle of newspapers containing accounts of the trial of Mathew Matherton, at whose commitment you were the magistrate, and of his after escape.

“That tale of horror chilled my blood, and then it boiled with rage. I became like a maniac, although I felt my anger was impotent, knowing my wrath could never find an object upon which to wreak its vengeance. Yet I swore in my frenzy, if I ever discovered this fiend whom I must call father, I would take retribution in my own hands; aye, by the eternal God, I swore it.”

“You, who know all, will make allowance for my vehemence. When I recall these terrible things my anger gets the better of my reason. From the files of newspapers I went to a larger city, and referred to your name in the Peerage. Almost hopeless, I wrote to your address, and upon receipt of your reply, as soon as I could arrange for my departure — which took longer than I supposed — I left America. The rest you know.”

The speaker's voice trembled with suppressed emotion during this recital. His face was flushed, and his whole frame seemed to labor under intense excitement.

For a moment there was silence between the two, and then the Baronet said: “My son, for my years may grant me to use such familiarity, remember that vengeance belongeth unto a Higher One. I can understand and sympathize with your passions, but earthly retribution, I doubt not, is long since past.”

“He may be living,” the other replied, his manner growing calmer; “but, pleasing God, I hope never to cross my path.”

“Do you still insist upon hearing all?”

“Yes, spare nothing—worse I could not hear!”

“Then,” resumed Sir John, “what you have told me will in a great degree assist my narrative. When I was yet a young man I had determined to spend some time abroad, and had gone to the Continent, there to join several companions of my own age. We had visited the most interesting parts of Europe, and were homeward bound, when circumstances brought us to Baden Baden, the great gambling centre. One evening as I was retiring, perhaps earlier than my comrades—for they sat up far into the night, in traversing the long piazzas of the hotel—I heard voices in angry dispute. They were directly in my path, and as I came near I observed an old gentleman, small of stature, whilst opposite to him, leaning against one of the pillars of the portico, was a younger man. The elder one seemed much excited, and was saying:

“‘I have done all that I could to avoid you. I have travelled from place to place, but to find my steps dogged. I have forbidden you all intercourse with my daughter, but you find cunning devices to circumvent me, and she,’ here his tone softened, ‘like all her sex, is weak and frail, and cannot understand her father is doing the best, and may never know it until too late.’

“‘That is all very well,’ the other replied, ‘but fair or foul, I have her love. It is only for your sake she withholds. You have money! why not settle down in your old age, with a dutiful son-in-law, who will be sure

to take care of your property, and so pass your days in peace. There is a picture of happiness for you! Yea, or nay, it must and will come!’

“‘Scoundrel! do you dare tell me to my face of such a union, when you know my utter abhorrence and detestation of you. I would rather see my daughter dead. I gave you two thousand guineas but a few weeks since—which I suppose you have gambled away—upon the consideration that you would haunt me no longer, for which I have your written promise; but what is the force of a promise with an utterly unworthy and depraved villain, without one spark of manhood. I would call you out, but that I might call in vain, your cowardice is even afraid of an old man, and kill you I cannot, though if ever there was justification, it is here; and she, oh, heavens, what a curse! she loves this vile reptile in the semblance of a man.’

“‘Really, I am much obliged,’ replied the younger one, ‘for your very complimentary remarks. As to the money, I confess you are wholly right; but you have plenty, and now I have discovered a new method by which I *must* win. But do you suppose I have no affection for the fair creature whom Providence happens to make your daughter? Does not my very persistence proclaim love, and does not her heart answer? Do you think it is for gold alone that I strive to win? Your obstacles give me fresh impulse to overcome. Come, come, old man, I ask you fairly for the pretty bird, and if you refuse, why, take the consequences.’

“‘That I should be spoken to thus, about my own flesh and blood! Out of my sight, villain; you do but insult the presence of a gentleman! Out of my sight, I say, or I will call the watch!’

“At this moment I stepped forward and said to your grandfather, for you may discover it was he, ‘Sir, my coming is accidental, I assure you, having no intention to intrude, but observing you are an Englishman and a gentleman, as a fellow-countryman I offer you my assistance, for I see you are in distress.’

“‘Oh, thank you! thank you!’ he exclaimed; ‘it gives me joy to hear so friendly a voice. Sir, I am indeed in deep distress, and if you would not think it forward, I will appeal to you for advice.’

“His companion slunk away upon my coming, and he continued:

“‘If you will step this way into my room, we will be more private.’”

“We exchanged the courtesies of introduction, and by that time entered his chamber. After a few preliminary remarks, he said, that he was sojourning there with his daughter; that he had come abroad on her account, to try and sever the feelings which she entertained for the man with whom he had been so angrily conversing. She had met him, how or in what manner he could scarcely tell, but in a desultory sort of way, and he had managed to ingratiate himself into her affections. He was much shocked when he discovered it, for as yet the thought of marriage in connection

with his daughter, had not entered his mind. Immediately making inquiries, he found the young man's character and habits most immoral; that he had frequently been in trouble, at one time coming under the ban of the law, and was an adventurer of the worst description, of no parentage, further than his appearance denoted that it must have been Jewish.

“‘I showed all this to my daughter,’ he continued; ‘I produced ample proofs to substantiate what I said, but he had gained such a hold upon her that my efforts were in vain. I then worked upon his mercenary character, and paid him to keep away, but found his absence was only procured so long as the money lasted. Again and again I tried, but all to no purpose; he has hounded me from place to place, to my home in London, and thence back. Everywhere I go, there he is, until I am well nigh broken-hearted with grief, for this is my only child, my only kin. She is not perverse, or wilful, but upon this one point—not to give him up. She will not be undeceived. She says he has her promise, and she will not break it, nor believe evil reports of him, for he tells her they are lies. What *can* I do!’ and here he wept bitterly.

“I was at a loss to know how to advise, but my temper and mettle were aroused, and my spirit enlisted against such persecution, so after reflection I said, ‘Leave the matter to me; maybe I can devise something for your relief.’ With some further talk I left him more composed, promising to return again. I

could see that he placed implicit confidence in my judgment, though he had little hope from the first of avoiding the catastrophe of such a marriage. However, my promise gave him comfort.

"I turned the whole matter over thoroughly in my mind that night, and determined on my course. I knew this class of men, adventurers as they are, their antecedents of little consequence or cared for in the transient communities in which they throw themselves, deceiving in regard to their position, if you can call it deception, where people are seldom interested sufficiently to question, so long as they contribute to the general amusement and extend their suave manners and gallantries into the saloons and ball rooms. Still, their behavior must maintain an outward semblance of respectability, which, if once laid bare, or exposed, ruins their every prospect of success for the time being in that particular locality, and they are obliged to find new fields for their exploits.

"With these reflections, upon the following morning I led my young friends' inclinations in the direction of the gambling hall, and we sauntered thither, where I felt confident we should find my sudden but self-made enemy.

"He was at the principal table, intent upon the play, but with an ever anxious glance back and around, for guilty consciences know not when justice may overtake them, and his mode of life had made him watchful and guarded. It was that popular hour when the place was

most crowded with visitors, many ladies being present, either as spectators or participants in the games. I requested my companions to keep close to me, permitting no one to interfere with my movements. This excited their curiosity, and as I was full of fun and humor in those days, they expected the denouement of a practical joke, for I refrained from communicating my true intentions, not wishing them to know the girl's weakness, or reveal the father's sorrow.

"The youngest of our party was St. Maur, then scarcely of age, father of the present earl, and the Duke of Farnborough, who afterward married Lady Jane St. Maur, and others equally distinguished, so that our arrival and stay had been heralded in the various prints, and we were quite the cynosure of tuft hunting eyes.

"I had provided myself with a heavy German horse-whip, which was concealed in my breast. As we paraded the saloon, stopping here and there to utter a salute, or chat with a chance acquaintance, his restless eye detected and must have recognized me of the previous night, for he wedged further in the crowd to escape observation. This did not deter me, though it required manœuvring to get closer, and at the same time avoid suspicion. When within arm's length, I seized him firmly by the collar. At the first intimation, the well-drilled attendants rushed forward to quell the disturbance, but seeing who we were, and of what rank, and my friends circling round me, caused them to desist.

My companions told me afterwards, though taken by surprise, they could see I was carrying out a settled line of action, and made up their minds to see me well through it. I dragged him somewhat apart from the throng, and drawing forth my whip, in the presence of them all, proceeded to lay it on right lustily. Resistance was of no use, he had to submit, the greater his efforts to escape the more rapidly descended the blows, and by the time I had got pretty well through, the bystanders overcame us and interfered. I cast him from me with violence and cried, 'If you ever dare to trouble, or annoy—a gentleman—you know whom I mean, I will kill you as I would a dog.' That is the last I ever saw of him until the trial. Myself and friends were arrested, and made to pay a heavy fine.

“The next morning I was awakened early by your grandfather, who came to my room, and with a broken heart told me they had gone. Mathew Matherton had obtained a secret meeting, and so worked upon the girl's sympathies for his misfortunes that she had fled, thinking his recent harsh treatment was instigated by her father, justifying her in absolving herself from a promise not to marry without his consent. They were wedded at a small church some miles distant, and your grandfather never met them again until that fatal night you know of. He attempted to follow, but they studiously avoided him, the husband incessantly arranging some cunningly devised scheme, by which Mr. Kirby would know of their poverty, or distress, and the

means of sending money. After much fruitless labor he gave the search up, keeping them informed of his address. He came here for no other reason, I believe, than to be near me, who knew his sorrow. I saw him frequently, and though I attributed much of his misfortunes to myself, for had I not acted in so hasty and intemperate a way, things might have been different, yet he never upbraided or said a harsh word to me.

“Your grandfather kept them constantly supplied with money, until a fortune, at one time large, was almost entirely swept away. It was in answer to these last demands that he experienced difficulty in raising the amount, and from that delay, and for a proper place to seclude his wife, who, after years without promise, was about to give birth to a child, it is supposed he came to Wentworth.

“Much of her time, since her marriage, had been passed alone, and in poverty; her husband would allow her but a scanty maintenance, whilst he indulged his inveterate taste for play. It was a disease, a monomania. He was continually betting upon some new method, or wild chimera, by which he drew conclusions that he *must* win.

“She was too proud to ask assistance, and was ignorant of his frequent demands, her husband intercepting all communication; and it was when he ordered her to sign a letter to her father, demanding money at once, that she refused to comply until she could see him in person, as they were so near the end of their journey.

He was aware that once under her father's protection, the opportunity to acquire the coveted sum would be lost, and that is what induced him to stop at the inn and led to such sad results.

"The rest you have gleaned from the papers of that day, which are in your possession.

"I have told you all I know. You demanded a plain, unvarnished history, which, against my wish and inclinations, I have given you, though scarcely fit or proper for a son to hear. But I would not pass lightly by the first request from the only living representative of Philip Kirby, though it cost me a greater pang."

"Your candor will be a source of relief to me," said his listener. "I now know the truth, and can form no darker phantoms."

He was silent for a while, then glancing at the lengthening shadows, arose, saying:

"I must express my gratitude for your kindly interest and hospitality, but my time is limited. I expected to return to London ere this, and, with your permission, will now take my leave, so as to be in time for the evening coach."

"Must you go so soon? but if you will, surely take one of my carriages."

"I would prefer my own way; it is but a passing whim, which I hope you will allow me to gratify, though I will accept of the offer of a conveyance so far as "Lonedrear House," which, if I start now, will

give me an opportunity of inspecting, and the public conveyance may pick me up later."

"As you please. I will not be an obstacle to your inclinations," then opening a desk, "here are the keys of what I may call your own property; I have had them all these years. They were handed me by Mr. Kirby's servant, with a note, asking that it be disposed of in some way. I placed it in my agent's hands to let, or sell, but there appears to be a fatality about it; he has never had an offer. I wrote to Mr. Kirby's address in London, but failing to receive a reply, called and found he was gone, they knew not whither. I suppose he was under the impression it was long since sold for county rates. I have never had it repaired, considering it a useless expenditure, and unless you can make use of it as a residence, it will prove a burden upon your hands. I will not detain you longer. If you can find time before your return to America—should that be your intention—I shall always be glad to see you here, and trust, if circumstances permit, you will make it as much as possible your home during your sojourn. It only remains for me to say good-by, and to wish you God speed."

Rufus Applegarth, during this interview, had restrained his feelings to the utmost. From the workings and twitchings of the muscles of his face could be seen the control he was exercising. Now it was over, and knowing all, he was calmer, but his thoughts seemed to goad and torment him: "His father a murderer, the slayer of his mother." As driving through the Park

upon that still autumn evening, his mind became more composed, but now and then he would start, muttering between his teeth: "Should I ever cross this man—but no, it is impossible, he is long since dead—but, should fate bring him in my path, in poverty, or wealth, in health, or sickness, father though he is, I would trample him as I would a reptile; no mercy, no cry for help should penetrate my heart with pity; I would kill him, thanking God for the privilege."

Halting at the inn to give directions as to the coach stopping for him, he continued, and was set down at Lonedrear House.

"I hope, sir, you are not going to live here," said the groom, respectfully, as he drew rein in front of the dilapidated place. "I do not mean to meddle with what is not my business, but ill luck seems to attend the house."

"Don't fear, my man," said the other, as leaping lightly from the wagon he dropped a half crown into his palm, "that's for your trouble, and thanks for the warning."

Taking the keys from his pocket he inserted the largest in the strong lock of the iron gates. It was a useless task. As well try to wrench the bolts from their bands as make the key turn. He then essayed to climb over, and by dint of sticking his feet in crannies in the wall, and holding to the bars, he succeeded. Once over, he could observe the interior; desolate and dreary was the scene. The frost had cut the tall weeds and scattered the leaves of the wild autumn flowers.

He passed on, upon the same grass-overgrown flags which its last occupant had so incessantly paced. He fitted the proper key to the door, but with as little purpose as the gate. He endeavored to push it open, but it withstood every effort. Then going to a side entrance, which was as securely fastened as the first, he clambered over the broken transom, gaining admission into a dark, narrow passage. Pressing forward to where he saw a glimmer of light, he discovered a stairway, which, ascending, brought him to the main hall, from which doors opened into the adjacent apartments. These he inspected severally, more from curiosity than any other feeling, for there was nothing to be gained, or expected, saving to look upon scenes with which his grandfather must have been so familiar in his loneliness. The furniture, at no time costly or profuse, was covered with mould, and its lining consumed by moths. Another flight of steps led to the rooms above, which wore the same appearance as below. There was the great tall bedstead, the drapery still hanging upon it in lank folds, everything bearing evidence of being quit-
ted hastily.

Applegarth's mind turned back and pictured the days when the house was inhabited by one belonging so intimately to his own history.

Hearing the sound of approaching wheels he sought egress by the same way he had entered, and was just in time to catch the coach, and upon the following noon was deposited in London at the lodging house to which he had been recommended upon first arriving.

CHAPTER VI.

BESSIE EGERTON.

UPON entering, Dr. Applegarth was met by a sweet, pretty girl, not more than seventeen, with soft blue eyes and golden hair, her dress, though neat, was plain; she held the door open for him, clearly having been watching and waiting his arrival.

"Well, Bessie, you see I am back, all right!"

"I am very glad, she replied; "I was afraid something had happened, or you had lost your way in this strange country."

"Oh no," he laughed, "I went to the place I told you of, and a gentleman was injured by an accident, so I staid to be of service. Has any one been to answer the note we left?"

"No one, though a letter came by post. You will find it in your room. I suppose from that my uncle has not returned. I would have gone to inquire had I known the way, and Mrs. Glover offered to show me, but I would not put her to the trouble, thinking it best to await your return."

At this moment a stout woman advanced, and in a loud, good-natured voice cried, nodding her head toward the girl: "She has done nothing but run to the door and window this last dozen hours, expecting you,

and you can't conceive how she's been helping me. I've been keeping such a house as this, here, there and everywhere, these twenty years, but in all that time I never came across a body who could make herself so useful; why, she's worth her weight in gold. First in the parlors, then fixing up the rooms, until the house looks like a different place."

"Mrs. Glover is giving me more praise," said the person spoken of, "than I deserve; I have done nothing more than accustomed to in America, where we are inured to greater hardships, and I have never been used to idleness."

"I am sure Mrs. Glover is right," said Applegarth, "for I never saw a more industrious little body, even in the States, unless it was your sister."

The mention of her family brought back a flood of recollections, as she said, the tears coming to her eyes:

"I wonder how they all are, and what they are doing. To be brought up as poor as we, and with a large family, is enough to make one exert their energies to the utmost."

"You will think no more of that," said her protector. "Some of these days your uncle will make a grand lady of you, and then you will forget America and all of us."

"Never! never!" she cried, the tears starting down her cheeks. "I can never forget my home, cheerless as it was, and mamma, who loved us so dearly." Here she could not restrain her sobs. Applegarth took her

hand tenderly in his, as though she were the child he considered her, and tried to assuage her grief.

In a moment she was self-possessed, a strong resolution coming to her aid, and resuming her natural manner, retreated with the landlady, to forget, as she had often done before, mental sorrow in manual labor.

Proceeding to his room, Applegarth found the letter, which read as follows:

SCOTLAND, —.

“*Rufus Applegarth, Esq.:*

“DEAR SIR: Your note was forwarded acquainting me of the arrival of my niece under your protection. Mrs. Cashbid, thinking—going, going—the trip would be some relief to the monotony of city life, accompanied me here, where I am correcting the catalogue—going, going—(articles having been disposed of at private sale since its completion, which, I must say, I strenuously object to) of the late Lord Plimsommons’ effects—going, going—which are to be sold upon Wednesday next. After that I shall return. If you will continue my niece under your charge—going, going—until that time, as we have given our domestics leave of absence, you will greatly oblige me. With my own and—go—go—Mrs. Cashbid’s love to our niece, and thanks to yourself,

“I am, yours truly,

“Going, going, gone,

“CASTOR CASHBID.”

Rufus Applegarth read and re-read this strange epistle, but was at loss to account for the interjection of "going, going," and "gone," presuming the auctioneer had written hastily in the midst of crying bids, but upon his further acquaintance with that gentleman the matter became quite intelligible.

Mr. Cashbid had started in life as an auctioneer's office boy, risen to clerk, and lastly set up for himself, finally becoming the most noted as well as wealthiest auctioneer of his day. Mr. Cashbid's mouth and lips were formed for calling bids and—for nothing else. It was asserted they had grown into that shape from constant practice, into the same shape as the sounds of the words. His whole heart and soul were engrossed in his business, to the exclusion of everything but Mrs. Cashbid, and this exception was anything but his own fault. That lady had constantly and incessantly reminded him of her existence, until she was emphatically stamped upon his recollection.

He invested his gains, not caring particularly for the money, but because it *was there*, habit having taught him not to spend, and to invest it was the only alternative. His wife was extravagant in dress only, and then not particularly to wear, but to put away, to be looked at, inspected, and fondly dwelt over. Not close, for for he was neither mean nor generous, never giving and never taking more than he was scrupulously entitled to, his business was his one pride, his one joy. Never so happy as when selling, and when not selling, only beatified in the thought of a coming sale.

Mr. Cashbid never talked about his own money, never talked about other people's, except in the way of values, unless to slap his customers on the back and tell them in a jolly manner how rich they were, albeit he might be knocking down their last article of value.

The auctioneer's greatest curiosity, or eccentricity, was in his repetition aloud of supposed bids, at a mythical sale. Whilst conversing upon dull subjects—for all subjects were flat to him except the material one—his whole countenance would suddenly lighten up and he would mechanically exclaim, "going, going, gone!" After dinner, in an easy chair, reading the evening sheet, with his feet stretched upon the fender, the same spasmodic expression would find vent. His lady, years before, had provided separate apartments, for her spouse kept up his awkward habit even when asleep; he might be snoring loudly, when suddenly springing erect, he would call out in a high key, "going, going, gone," and would as suddenly sink back and resume his natural slumbers as though never interrupted.

It had grown upon him slowly, but now it entered into every movement. He was perfectly unconscious, and at last not only did he make use of it in conversation, but inserted it in notes, letters and bills. Upon one occasion, one being returned and explanation requested, he was shocked, and exclaimed: "Why, bless my soul, is this mine?—going, going"—and, attempting to correct, made matters worse by adding more of the objectionable expressions, until both

himself and correspondent were lost in a maze of—going, going, gones.”

Mr. Cashbid's maternal parent had been twice married—first to a poor gentleman, next to a well-to-do merchant—the result of which was he had a half brother by the first marriage, the father of Bessie, who had emigrated to America and there died, leaving an industrious widow and an only daughter. The widow mated a second time to neither a richer nor better man, who gently departed, leaving her a large household to provide for. She had frequently heard her first husband, Mr. Egerton, speak of his half brother, but was in ignorance of his whereabouts, or fortune, as the letters written to the old address were never answered, and the last returned from the post marked “not found.”

When the young physician became appointed surgeon in charge of the hands employed upon certain extensive public improvements, circumstances led him to seek a temporary home in this family, whom he found, with the strictest economy, could barely maintain themselves in a state of more than respectability. In looking after his own search and inquiries, he discovered the name of Castor Cashbid in a Business Directory, and it was by his advice that Bessie's mother undertook to renew the former fruitless correspondence.

This last communication, which rehearsed the circumstances and poverty of her family, met with a speedy response, declaring unconsciousness of Mr.

Cashbid's late brother's letters and life, and offering, as he was childless, that Bessie should be sent to England, and they would adopt her as their own offspring, enclosing funds for that purpose, besides quite a handsome *douceur* for the widow; at the same time intimating plainly, that "the rest" being of no kin, he hardly thought called upon to further interest himself in the matter. This arrangement detained Rufus Applegarth longer in America than his appointed time, and it was for these reasons that Bessie Egerton had crossed the ocean with him and was now in London.

CHAPTER VII.

THE AUCTIONEER.

SEVERAL days latter, Applegarth procured a cab for the purpose of conveying Bessie to her uncle's domicile. That young lady had repacked her not extensive wardrobe, and stood ready for departure, though it must be confessed not only loth to leave her present quarters, but still more to separate from her protector, who was the single link left of associations with her own family and country.

Hastily descending the stairs, the surgeon found his protégée and the mistress of the house affectionately taking leave, for she had endeared herself to those with whom she had been recently thrown; and the landlady, by dint of answers to a thousand questions, had discovered that Bessie was a relation of Mr. Cashbid, and was going there, perhaps with expectations, though stoutly denied, over and over again, by the girl; yet Mrs. Glover would not listen to such denials, and Bessie had grown to be of vast importance in the eyes of that lady, who was aware of the Auctioneer's wealth and also knew him, for at sales had he not cried out, drawing every eye upon her: "Now, Mrs. G., here is just the thing you want," (a fine marble centre table, Brussels carpet, or pair of curtains, as the case might be), "almost

new, the very article for your parlor front; why Madame, when inquiries are made for lodgings, and the parties see this—and observe it they *must and will*—your fortune's made. They'll never turn from a house with such furniture, going—going—gone,” and the poor woman, flattered by this public recognition and complimentary remarks, would meekly pay, thankful for the privilege of such distinction and notoriety.

“I shall come and see you, Miss Egerton, never fear, if they'll let me in, but la! I don't suppose they'll let the likes o' me in, for you see people's very different at their place of business, from what they are at home.”

“Oh, but I'm sure they won't object, and I will run around here and see if I may not be able to help you make dessert, or sweet bread for tea.”

“Well child I shan't forget you, and if you should stand in need of advice, or a friend, though it may be a poor one, just call on Mary Ann Glover, and depend on her a comin', if such a thing be possible.”

“Dear Mrs. Glover, it is kind of you to speak so, I know you mean it, and I have been very fortunate to make such a friend.”

“Friend! you've made everybody your friend; now there's old Mr. Smiles in 35, whose linen you fixed up so nicely, he says to me this very morning, ‘Mrs. Glover,’ says he, ‘she ain't agoin'?’ ‘Yes, sir,’ I says, ‘she's agoin' this very day,’ and ‘*where's* she agoin', Mrs. Glover?’ ‘She's agoin' to her uncle's, Mr. Cashbid's, sir.’ ‘Her uncle's, Mr. Cashbid's!’ ‘Yes, sir,’ says I,

‘there’s just where she’s agoin’,’ and you ought to see how hard he looked at me, and he turned round and took up his hat and pulled out his handkercher and would you believe it, wiped his forehead and his eyes; my dear, there warn’t no dust blowin’ and it wasn’t hot either, and my dear, I saw him a wipin’ of his forehead and eyes for half a square. I do believe he’s in love with you.”

“You shouldn’t speak so, Mrs. Glover. I dare say the old gentleman has forgotten me by this time, and surely could never feel distressed on my account, as I don’t suppose he’s said half a dozen words to me since I’ve been here, except to thank me for repairing his wardrobe, which I must say, was in a terrible condition. He is a kind-hearted old gentleman, and told me he had no kith or kin.”

“My dear, we all love you. I didn’t think I could take to a person so quick as I have to you, but old Mr. Smiles, I’ve seen him a watching you out of the corner of his eye. He’s a queer customer; he’s been with me these eighteen years and better, a movin’ with me five times, and he does the same thing to-day he did the first day and every day since he came, goes out in the mornin’s and comes back to dinner; goes out after dinner and comes back at eleven o’clock precisely. Day in and night out, it’s the same thing. He’s in some great agent’s or lawyer’s office, and they say kept on short salary and long hours. I don’ know, he always pays me promptly to the very day and at the same hour, which is after his chop o’ Monday mornin’s.”

"I am afraid, Mrs. Glover, you have arrayed poor Mr. Smiles in a much more romantic garb than he is entitled to, or desires to affect."

"Well, my dear, you see you are young yet and don't know men's ways. I was married when I was eighteen, and bless your soul, when Glover was courtin' me, that's *just* the way he did, watchin' me nigh all the time. If I went out he was looking at me, if I came in he was a staring at me all the time. La, child! *them's* the sort that kills theirselves for love. Listen," and she went closer to Bessie, "Glover killed hisself because he was jealous, (the coroner's jury gave verdict of delirium tremens) but," with a very emphatic shake of the head, "there was no cause for it. It sort o' chilled me for a while, but I got over it, my dear. A lone woman who has to get along and help others besides, soon gets over them sort of things. But men's all alike, high or low, rich or poor, it's the women that's different."

"I am sure I'm sorry for all your troubles, my dear Mrs. Glover, but in regard to Mr. Smiles, you can rest satisfied, his heart is whole; and now I must say good by."

With this the landlady, passing fair, very fat and over forty, encompassed Bessie in a good tight hug, and after one or two loud smacking kisses, released her, and with the corners of her apron to her eyes, stood as disconsolate as if she were losing for ever her very best friend, instead of parting from a newly-made acquaintance.

The cab stopped, and its occupants were put down in front of a comfortable though not pretentious dwelling in the vicinity of Forrest Square.

There was nothing grand-looking about the establishment. It resembled the owner—solid, plain and substantial. They were ushered into a library, or reception room. Here were book cases filled with handsomely bound volumes of all sizes and descriptions, clearly but seldom touched, for neither Mr. Cashbid or lady indulged in literature; in fact it was doubtful if they read anything except the newspapers, and these were devoured—titles, court circulars, advertisements, and all. Pretty vases, small statuary, and inlaid furniture were scattered promiscuously throughout the house, the result and advantage of selections from sales, upon the principles of “first come, first served,” and as the auctioneer was the first to view the goods, he took excellent care to have the first choice. His horses and carriage were of this class, and the same principle insinuated itself into the wine cellar, where could be found excellent brands selected from many an aristocratic epicure’s estate.

They had not waited long before Mr. and Mrs. Cashbid simultaneously made their appearance; the gentleman’s legs were in advance, but as his better half had the advantage in height and her head projected eagerly over and beyond his shoulders, it is doubtful which entered first.

Mr. Cashbid halted a second, (bringing on an

awkward collision with the train in the rear,) for the purpose of surveying both parties, especially the future addition to his household. He believed himself a thorough judge of character at first sight, and never lost an opportunity of making a well-defined observation.

At present from his demeanor he was evidently satisfied with the scrutiny. Mr. Cashbid was altogether a jolly-looking sort of person, quite stout, about the medium height, with red face, gray whiskers, and a mouth such as has been described.

"Dr. Applegarth," he said, coming forward, "I have to thank you for taking a great deal of trouble; but business, sir, business you know, brooks no delay, going — going — and this is my niece! Let me see," holding her off a little, "yes, yes, resembles her father. Give me a kiss, my dear, for we must be fast friends, and here is your aunt."

This last advanced in the same manner and was evidently, like her husband, much pleased with her niece's appearance.

"Dr. Applegarth," continued the auctioneer, after a proper degree of fuss, affection, and salutation upon the part of the relatives had been gone through, "I must thank you again for your kindness in this matter, and as we dine at seven, within which it is a few minutes of now, I must really insist upon your staying; and besides, I want to hear something of America, for I have an idea of going — going — going — there sometime in the future."

"I will accept of your kind invitation, he said reluctantly," for he deemed his mission and duty were ended, and would rather retire to his own thoughts and solitariness. "But I can hardly summon an appetite, as Bessie and I have been keeping up our American habits and dining early."

"We call that lunch," said the business man, "I take a pretty good bite myself at that hour just after morning trade, and yet I have an excellent renewed appetite by seven; so come, come, I will give you a good glass of sherry and some 'fourteen' claret, going—going." Then turning to his wife who had assisted Bessie to divest herself of her wraps, "Take Bessie to her room and meet us at dinner; hurry, for my hunger is sharp, though I can't say I'm afraid of lessening it by delay," and taking his niece's hand, "my little girl, you must make yourself perfectly at home, we have no children, you know, and Providence seems to have sent you to fill a want, which we never thought existed until now."

This was said in a feeling manner. He was not given to sentiment, but had correctly expressed the conclusion that himself and wife had come to. To be sure, he had consulted her in every arrangement and they had found a warmer feeling existing in their hearts than they had ever suspected. A something to live for; an object where there had been a void, a substratum bringing forward a quality which was there but dormant, showing the bright side of a hard-working,

money-making man, and from that hour a greater happiness came to Mr. and Mrs. Cashbid.

They all dined heartily and cheerfully, and there was scarce a merrier little party for the time being assembled, than around that board; even Rufus Applegarth forgot all but those present, and in genial conversation with his host passed the hours pleasantly, until finding it late he had a cab called, and with a gentle word to Bessie and a hearty shake of the hand and going — going — gone from Mr. Cashbid, was driven off to his lodgings.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE PAWNBROKER.

IN one of those dirty, crooked streets or lanes, which have their commencement at the bank of the Thames and wind a tortuous way until finally lost in a labyrinth of alleys and courts; where the buildings had been erected singly, and from time to time, so that no two were alike, all bearing evidence of that filth and dirt which characterized the inhabitants, composed mostly of those classes who follow the water for a livelihood; at the central turn of an elbow in one of these ways, where its front could be seen for the space of a square upon either side, standing prominently to view, was a dingy two-story house. Prominent, besides its position, for the reason that upon a three-pronged iron rod projecting above the door were suspended what once were two gilt balls; the gilt had certainly disappeared, as clearly had a third ball also, for there was the protruding prong, which could have been intended for no other purpose useful or ornamental. Though the gilding had disappeared, here and there could still be detected traces of it—a black, yellowish hue having usurped its place.

These signs and symbols, together with a line inserted weekly in a third rate newspaper, informed the public,

(though it could have been intended for no other public than the denizens of that immediate locality,) "that Moses Mosler and Brother would be happy to advance money upon any articles according to their value, that might be left with them." A pair of strong double doors flanked with wide windows upon either side admitted both ingress and light; these openings above and below were guarded by wire grating as if the present, or original occupant had not trusted too much to the honesty, or good intentions of his neighbors. The entrance was usually closed, and at night required a summons to gain admission, when it would be partially opened, a fastened chain upon the inside preventing the further intrusion of an unexpected, or unwelcome visitor.

There was no concealment or privacy about the patrons of this money-lending institution, as many customers applying in the broad light of day as after the evening shadows had shut the sunlight out. Neither was there any privacy within, for the lower floor consisted of one large room which bore testimony of having been at a former period divided into smaller compartments, for the places where the partitions had been torn away, upon the ceiling and floor, were left unplastered and uncovered. A depression, or step downward, about midway of the floor divided the household department from the business portion. In this last division were a dilapidated stove, a deal table, and a cupboard containing a meagre larder and sparse table, and kitchen utensils.

Around the walls, except in one corner, where ascended a rickety flight of steps to the apology for sleeping accommodations, were innumerable open boxes, closed pigeon-holes, and coarse chests, each having an almost unintelligible or nearly obliterated number, and all filled with divers articles—here a well-worn coat, there a half-made dress, whilst the gaudy tinsel of variety-show costumes loomed up in dingy places.

There was also a well scarred, defaced counter, with innumerable small drawers behind, which whole arrangement, judging from appearances, had probably come from the constable's sale of an apothecary's fixtures. These had locks upon them, and were, no doubt, intended for more important articles, of lesser bulk and greater value. There was an account book, pen and sloppy inkstand near at hand, besides some soiled, yellow, spotted paper, which must have been purchased for a considerable less than cost of manufacture, by reason of damage.

Near to one of the apertures, occasionally peering out into the fast descending darkness, and restlessly pacing up and down, was an old man with flowing hair, incessantly stroking a long beard—both hair and beard were nominally white, though soiled and matted by want of care and cleanliness.

There could be no mistaking the features, form and dress, to classify him otherwise than a descendant of Israel, and, from the surroundings, no question of his profession. "Dan'l's late, always late," he muttered,

pettishly, angrily clinching the unoccupied hand, thrust deep into the pocket of his long, greasy garments, grimy with dust and age. "The rascal is getting beyond me; knows too much. I wish I could do without him—without any body. I tried that; can't get along;" shaking his head negatively. "Let me see; why, Dan'l's most a man; ten years since Squint first brought him. How time flies," he still soliloquized; "twenty years ago I was new here myself, and who would know me now? none"—glancing round nervously, startled by his own thoughts. "But I'm getting gold, gold! yes, gold in plenty, and will soon have enough to begin with;" and louder, as if impossible to restrain his exultant feelings: "*then* I'll break every pool and bank that holds a pound! I'll break them all!" he cried, between his clinched teeth, and relapsing into his low cunning undertone: "I know a system that must succeed, *must* win! All that I want is sufficient to begin, and — *lose*! Yes; I must lose for a certain time — then win! win forever!

"I've worked it out; I know the scheme; let me get but the first sum. It's large, very large, but not too great for the return, and I've nearly saved, almost got it. Plenty of time yet; I'm not old! Oh, no! I'm not old! I'm good for four-score and ten, and a dozen years to follow—then wealth and fame unbounded. Gold, gold!" and savagely, "vengeance, too! cautiously, though. Cautiously, 'slow, but sure.' I'll make him feel my sting yet, though I died for it.

I'll bring him down low, I'll make him suffer, I'll crush him — curse him — as a bauble between my fists;" and he pressed his fingers together as if his enemy were there. "But here comes Dan'l — so — so — softly — softly.

"Dan'l, you've been lounging; you're late; but, come, come, I will not bring you, as your great namesake, unto a second judgment, though my judgment is very good, especially in regard to the value of old clothes and plated jewelry; and — and the interest, not usury — not usury, but interest we ought to receive for the gold — for the bright gold! together with any little trouble in the matter. Eh! Dan'l; eh! Dan'l, boy;" and he rolled his palms over each other, his hollow, bent sides shaking with simulated mirth at his own wit, but ending in a fit of short, jerky coughing, which when over, he exclaimed, as if suddenly recollecting:

"Did you find the place?"

"I found it; couldn't miss it well; too big and 'andsome. They says as how the folks will come in to stay awhile — fixin' up for em now," replied the boy, or rather, young man, as his employer and master had characterized him. He was a stubby-made youth, remarkable for nothing in particular, except a shock of fiery-red hair, and an extremely unsophisticated and innocent expression, which his actual knowledge of evil largely gainsayed.

"Handsome, is it?" grunted the Jew; "I'll make it handsome for them. Give me time, just a little time; I'll make it — What did Squint say?"

"Wants you to come round after a bit. Says he can't get out to-night."

"Been drunk, I suppose," grunted the old man. "Wants me to come there, where his she hag of a wife will be listening to all we say." Then speaking in affected sympathy: "I suppose you saw your poor little sister, and told her *all* your hardships and how you are overworked, and any little secrets in the business you happen to come across?"

"I seed her," replied the boy, curtly.

"Who else did you see?"

"No body, as I knows on."

"You are lying, sir!" cried the old man, extremely irritated. "I saw you talking to some one at the corner. You think I can't see, eh? Who was it?"

"I rec'lects now. I believe I did drop a word to Slummer's Dick."

"Ah, ha! you've been making new acquaintances, have you?" cried he of the Lombard arms. "Slummer's Dick, that's who it is. I've seen you with him before. You mean the pot boy at the corner groggery," he wound up, contemptuously.

"He waits on Mr. Slummer's customers," returned the boy, doggedly, as if to resent any indignity cast upon his friend. His demeanor was not timid as he leant lazily against the much mutilated counter.

"Slummer's Dick, indeed," repeated the old man, scornfully; "and so he's your boon companion. Well, keep on with him. He'll be hanged some day, and so will you too, if your intimacy continues so long."

"Mr. Slummer says as how he's a wery good boy, and he'd like to have me along of him. He says I were jest made for that business and oughtenter stay here any longer, and he'd give me good wages."

"And who told you all this?" inquired the other, not trying to conceal his rising ire.

The boy was obstinately silent.

"Who told you?" cried the old man, again. I'll be bound, Slummer never said it himself."

"Dick told me he said it, if yer wants to know."

"*He* told you?" yelled the old man; "did he tell you anything else? Out with it — out with it, I say, or I'll ——" and he raised his hand menacingly.

"Yes; he told me as how you were an old skinflint, and the perlice would come, if the devil didn't, and ketch you some day," returned the boy, maliciously, straightening up defiantly as though preparing for battle royal.

The old man appeared dumbfounded. This was not secret, nor covert, but open rebellion, promising to be revolution. Besides, he feared the enemy. He could not, however, control the too willing muscles of his arm, and it was about to descend with force upon Dan'l's cranium, when that youth turned it aside, saying:

"Look here, you ain't a goin' to beat me; I've had 'nough that sort o' thing. I don't want to hurt you, but keep yer hands off. Yer old and I wont strike unless yer hits me furst. Yer shant beat me, an' now yer knows it; so hands off, I say!"

If the old man was dumbfounded before, consternation seized him now, and exclaiming as the only explanation to be rendered for the other's ferocious conduct:

"Dan'l, you 've been drinking." And in connection with this supposition, strategy came to his support, and he whined:

"Why Dan'l, you know I wouldn't hurt you for the world. Haven't I brought you up? Didn't I take you out of the work-house, and didn't Mr. Squint take your sister? Think where you would be if it hadn't been for *me*. Oh, how ungrateful you are! and do not I let you go to the theatre every night, and give you sixpence at the end of the week? Oh! the ingratitude, the terrible ingratitude of this world!" and he cast his eyes sanctimoniously upward, entirely obscuring the pupils, giving to his face not a mortal but satanic look.

"Stalker pays you fo'pence a night for me, and you gives me sixpence at the end o' the week," replied the boy, lowering his arms, partly though not yet quite mollified by the other's changed mood. "That's mor'n 'alf for you, an' a 'bit' for me. But I aint a complainin' about that; I aint a complainin' no how. I knows where my bed is, and I knows where my board is, and I don't mind the bizness; but you musn't try ter beat me no more. I can't stand that and I wont."

"Oh! Dan'l, Dan'l!" and the feigned tears apparently came to the other's eyes. "You, whom I have so cared for, to turn against and wish to leave me. I never would have thought it."

"I didn't want ter hurt yer feelin's," said the youth, now wholly pacified, and completely taken aback by this mild, unexpected behavior, and with faint visions of an heir apparency to the shop and contents, "so you needn't grieve over it. I axes yer parding."

"Oh! Dan'l, Dan'l! you gladden my heart. Now you are the same good boy you have ever been." But there was a speech the sensations called forth by which although momentarily repressed, yet rankled in the Jew's heart, and he could no longer control a fresh outbreak.

"And so Slummer's Dick says I'm old, does he? He lies! the rascal lies! Look at my hands, are they old? Look at my feet, are they old? Can he run faster than I? can he jump higher than that?" And he leaped upward with a sudden bound, which had the effect to put Dan'l again on his guard; but seeing it was only intended as an exposition, a grinning expression of wonder, more than admiration, covered his dull features.

"What can *he* do that I can't?" kept on the aged sinner, his eyes blazing with angry excitement. "He says I'm old, does he? Ah! I wish I had him here, I'd show him how old I am!" and he ground his teeth and clinched his fists. "But go, get your supper; you're hungry, I suppose; you are always late and always hungry. I'll have to starve myself yet to satisfy your gluttonous appetite. Eat, but be a better boy hereafter." Winding up in an ameliorated tone.

"There's no use in begrudging my wittles," protested the lad, turning carelessly away, "as I enjoys 'em all the same, and as I cooks and waits for both parties, and does a heap o' other things. I thinks as how I earns 'em, and is entitled to 'em." And in a lower key, as he receded to the farther end of the culinary department: "You wenomous ole wiper, I knows on some of yer tricks as you don't think fur. I knows as who comes here with harticles as aint plated jewelry, nor old clothes neither, and such brings 'em as hasn't got the money to buy 'em with neither. Oh! I knows a thing or two. Well, well, he's been good to me, if that's what he calls it, tho' it's a bad sort o' goodness; so here goes fur the "inner man," as they says at Stalker's, which indiividual is just at present werry much dug out. I wonder if the ole cuss bought anything while I was gone. I seed the cheesemonger as come along ahead of me; maybe he got a third class shave, 'on'y a little spilt,' from him."

He proceeded to lay on the deal table a scanty meal for the twain, and without waiting, went hungrily, not to say greedily to work on the material before him.

Presently the old man reappeared with a black, much battered hat, and stout walking-stick; this last he deposited in a corner, keeping the former on his head, and proceeded to draw some tea upon the stove, for this article was the only good one he indulged in, and was too precious to be entrusted to the keeping of the tardy, negligent Dan'l; then sitting down, helped

himself and the boy, upon which the latter, observing the tokens of a transitory migration, asked:

"Goin' to lock up to-night?"

"Yes; I am going to see Squint. There are no vessels arriving, and it wont matter much. If anybody comes, let them wait, or call again," he growled.

This was quite different from the usual course, for the proprietor was always on hand, except at stated intervals, when he deputed the boy with many and strict injunctions, so that Dan'l, astonished but glad of his exemption, said, glancing at a time-worn clock in motion among the many other silent ones:

"'Most my time. Somethin' new on the boards; big run! Stalker's makin' lots o' tin."

"Better raise your wages then," was the sarcastic retort.

"Not much," replied the boy; "he aint that sort. There's six o' us, you know, at fo'pence a night."

"And how much do you make outside?"

"Werry little," rejoined the boy, looking uneasily at his patron, as though that odd sixpence might be in danger. "Well, I'm off, unless you wants me to close up first."

"Never mind, I'll do that. You can go."

And so Daniel departed for Stalker's—otherwise known as "Stalker's Varieties," a theatre, dance and music hall—at odd times, as the seasons and public taste required, where with perhaps a half dozen others he was employed to hand the liquors and cigars to the somewhat promiscuous and questionable audience.

After the boy had set out and his master finished sipping tea, he got up and took from the till or little drawer used for small change, several shillings and half crowns; these, each and every, had a round hole punched through. No piece of copper, silver, or gold ever came into that receptacle, but ere it went out, that same hole was bored, possibly as a mark of future identification, more probably for the metal obtained from the coin. Taking several pieces he placed them loosely in his pocket, then picking up his walking stick, felt and examined it closely, falling into his half-aloud cogitations:

“It will do, it will do; and so, Master Richard, I’m old, am I? and you want to entice my servant from me? If I’m old, I ought to have a long head on my shoulders, eh, Mr. Richard?” continuing to chuckle to himself; “and Master Daniel, I’ll consider your case too. The rascal knows too much—too much, I’m afraid. He’s been listening!” So saying, with muffled mutterings he went out, securing the house after him.

Passing on over the narrow pavement, until coming to a wider street corner, where a blaze of light came from out the great glass windows of a tavern or beer shop, he paused to peer cautiously around, for it was seldom he ever ventured so far beyond his own domains, and this precautionary observance had grown to be a matter of second nature; then pushing open the swinging door, entered. Scattered about were groups of men, talking, smoking and drinking. The

old man saw this indistinctly as he advanced to a secluded and unoccupied seat, his attention being riveted upon a slim, slick-looking young man, with arms a-kimbo, resting his back lazily against the bar, his little bead-like eyes scanning about keenly to detect any signs or symptoms of renewed want of refreshments, not however failing to take in the new comer; and so when the old man was seated and rapped with his stick vigorously upon the floor, the summons was speedily answered by the veritable "Slummer's Dick," alias Richard Slummer, correctly Richard Fasting, who was too much astonished at the unusual apparition presenting itself, to reply with his customary "coming, coming, sir," but looked at the pawnbroker with a vacant air of inquiry.

"Ah! Richard, my good boy, is that you?" said the firm of Moses Mosler & Bro., for this individual alone constituted the fraternity singular and whole. "You see, Richard, I know you. A young man of your brave and easy style cannot help attracting notice; but bring me a mug of beer, Richard; a good mug, with the bead well on. Draw it yourself, Richard, I would rather trust to *your* drawing, my lad."

"That I will, sir," cried the youth, agreeably surprised at these flattering remarks. "It shall be run right, I promise you." And returning to the bar with an additional air of importance, as though through his own fascination and instrumentalities, had been obtained a fresh customer for his employer, in which worthy's

opinion he must naturally hereafter be of greater consequence — and *such* a customer.

“There it is, sir, and couldn’t be set up better,” said Slummer’s Dick, as with a flourish he placed the foaming mug before his new customer, who remarked, insinuatingly:

“Richard, I perceive you are a boy of fine character, to take so much interest in waiting upon an *old man*; but never fear, attentions of this kind always meet with their reward.”

Richard smirked and grinned. “It gives me a heap of pleasure in waiting on a gentleman like you, sir, and I ’opes as you ’ll drop in hoften.”

“That depends, Richard; that depends. If you are always here to serve me, it will prove a great inducement. Dan’l—you know my Dan’l—gives excellent accounts of you.”

“Yes, sir, I knows Dan,” as if to say, who didn’t know Dan, “an’ a good time he must ’ave of it too, as I allers tells him, with a situation at the V’ri’ties, where he can ’ave his fun and make a shillin’ too.”

“Does he make so much as a shilling, you think, Richard?” said the pawnbroker, nervously wriggling in his chair; “a shilling a night is a large sum at the end of the year.”

Richard saw that he had divulged too much of his friend’s confidence, so quickly answered: “Oh, no, not so much as that, I s’pose. I was only a speakin’ of what *might* be done by a lively, hactive boy, but

Dan'l he's so back'ard, and he's precious pertickler 'onest."

Moses Mosler & Bro., had reason to think somewhat differently of this last, but said: "Dan'l's a fine boy, though not so smart and brisk as you, Richard. It wouldn't do for me to have a lad like you"—falling into a humorous mood—"It wouldn't do, Richard, to have such a good-looking, rakish fellow like you about me. I should be continually pestered by the lasses. I expect half of them about here are dying in love with you now. You handsome dog, you know it." And he punched his cane into the ribs of Slummer's Dick quite hilariously. That individual was only too ready and willing to acknowledge the soft impeachment by more smirks, smiles and grimaces. Here Slummer, who was drawing the beer for his fast coming in habitués, and being of the opinion that Richard had devoted time sufficient for even the most important personage, cried out from the bar:

"Dick, here, Dick, where in the world have you got to?"

"Coming, coming," cried the lad, as he darted off, not however before first receiving an order from the Jew for another mug, besides having a couple of shillings slipped into his palm.

As the boy departed, the old man looked at his stick as if the recent experiment with it was perfectly satisfactory; a gleam of malicious animosity crossing his features.

After a few seconds absence, the lad came back, and wiping off and adjusting the table and placing thereon the refilled glass, lingered a few moments to catch the dulcet words of flattery and adulation that might be in store. He was not long delayed or disappointed, for the old man, perhaps deeming his opportunity short, immediately reopened the conversation.

"Richard, I've been observing you for some time; but I'll be bound, you never suspected it, eh?"

Richard professed profound but pleasing ignorance.

"And you are worked hard — now don't deceive me, for I have watched you; isn't it so?" pausing for a reply.

"Well, sir, I don't mind telling you; I *is* worked very hard, and 'aven't any time give me neither, and the wages is low. Slummer's very close, he is."

"That's what I've been thinking. Dan'l has told me how bad you are treated, and it's a shame — a real, right down shame! that so fine a lad as you, and with *such* attractions, should be so confined and imposed upon. But *I* like you, Richard; *I've* taken a great fancy to you, and I intend to stop this. I mean you to do well; but you must not repeat this — mus'ent let it get to Slummer's ears. No one must know it."

Dick was all attention and willing to comply with any promise.

"Well then, I have something good in store for you; but I can't tell it here, it must be private, *very* private. What time do you get off to-night?"

"This is Saturday night, sir; gets off at ten minutes past twelve o'clock — we close at twelve, sharp."

"That will do. Can you meet me? — and, by the way, Richard, here is half a sovereign for you. I told you I liked you," and with a wave of his hand, "never mind thanking me; but could you not meet me to-night, just after twelve — say about three streets below and two to the right? You can? so much the better," as the other eagerly gave an affirmative reply.

"Well, I will be there, and tell you something greatly to your advantage; but Slummer is calling, I will wait until you come back. You will be there punctual?"

"You may depend on my a-bein' there, sir. I won't disappoint you noways nor nohow. Comin', comin'," and the young man hastened off, his mind in a whirl of excitement at so much unexpected good fortune. He had never, in all his life, had so much money at one time. His spirits were in ecstacies; he felt as treading on air, determined to be at the rendezvous at all and every hazard. These sensations were cooled, though not extinguished, by the sharp voice of Mr. Slummer.

"Dick! Dick! drat the boy. Don't you hear the gents callin'. What are you doing over there so long?"

"I was a waitin' on a gentleman, Mr. Slummer, as I 'opes to make a customer hof. He likes my waitin' werry much, he says."

"Likes *your* waitin'? The devil he does! He comes because he knows the quality o' the liquor and it's

'andy. There, git along with your conceit and take them mugs." And whilst Richard was busily engaged attending to the requirements of his office and the pecuniary interests of the establishment, his new friend took the opportunity of quietly withdrawing. He had borrowed Richard's knife, to pare his nails, he said, and now conveniently forgot to return it. A keen, sharp blade it had, like an Italian weapon. But its loss did not afford the youth the slightest uneasiness, if he thought of it at all, for he was anxiously counting the minutes until "just after twelve."

CHAPTER IX.

THEOPHILUS SQUINT, ATTORNEY.

WHEN the pawnbroker reached the open street he chuckled inwardly, as if in high favor with himself: "The rascal! I have him fixed now. I'm old, am I? and the police will come for me! We shall see, Master Richard—and the coin is marked—we shall see!" So repeating, he hastened onward at a shuffling gait, avoiding the more crowded thoroughfares, until coming to a retired, cleanly street, in a poor but respectable portion of the city, where were a neat row of two-storied houses, generally denominated "one-eyed," for the reason of having but a single window in front, beside the entrance. A high, narrow stoop with an iron railing, led to a door with a well-rubbed brass plate, bearing in bold letters the name of "Theophilus Squint," or, sometimes called Thieffy, for shortness. He rapped on it, and a pale-faced maid answered the call. She was small, very small, even for her age, which could not have been more than twelve, or fourteen at most. Her features might have been called pretty, but for a pinched, drawn expression, and a timorous, cowed manner, as if afraid to speak above a breath, or in constant dread of being reprimanded for some word or act. This was Dan's sister, and the

house, as the brass plate intimated, that of Theophilus Squint, in reality, as the door plate did *not* proclaim, that of Mrs. Squint.

Mr. Squint was, or professed to be, an attorney; how, when or where he was called to the bar no one either thought nor cared to inquire. His practice was confined—very much confined—no one knew where his office was located, least of all his clients—for such he professed to have—and yet he was always to be found at, near or about the Inns of Court.

Sufficient that Mr. Squint was an attorney, though his brothers of the profession—that is, the major, or better part of them—kept aloof from him; and whoever kept his company was instantly recognized as a person to be avoided by those who had character and reputation to sustain.

The attorney had been intended for the ministry, but either his inclinations or acquirements had fallen far short of the goal, and he had taken to the law, also to drink, as well as other dubious practices.

With slight cause this worthy's wife had persuaded herself into the belief that she was a confirmed invalid. Mr. Squint had no objection to this state of affairs—though he more than suspected the truth—for it left his locomotion freer, when away from the home influence, which, like all other surroundings in immediate contact with that power, was brought under complete subjection. The little maid who opened the door had felt this sway with terrific effect. Poor little Fan! she

could not speak above a whisper for fear of hurting her mistress' nerves. This little household drudge had gone on in a continued state of trepidation and terror until her own nerves were wrought to such a pitch that the invalid's sharp voice of reprimand acted upon them like the shock of a galvanic battery, so that when in a scarcely audible voice she answered the visitor's inquiry of "whether her master was at home," it is not surprising the question required repetition in a louder key, which startled the little maid almost out of her wits.

"Please, sir — yes, sir, master's home: missus said as you was to be let in." Then, half opening the door for the visitor's ingress, she did not slam, but gently shut it to in the face of another personage, evidently a dun, who, having vainly tried every stratagem to gain admittance, now departed in disgust. The little servant knew her place thoroughly, being as much as life was worth, however plausible the pretext, to let such in.

The pawnbroker entered, not without misgivings, and, after divesting himself of hat and cloak, hesitated about his stick, exhibiting a reluctance to part with it, and finally retaining it, was introduced into the presence of the attorney.

"Moses, is that you? sit down," said Mr. Squint, patronizingly, and without any further ceremony of welcome than a condescending wave of the hand. The old man complied, with a not very amiable sentence upon his lips, but spying the angle of a female

figure through the small folding doors that joined the two apartments, changed it into a courteous reply.

At intervals in the daily grasping life of the pawnbroker, there were unmistakable gleams intimating a far different anterior spirit and sphere of life.

"Well, my friend, is there anything I can do for you?" queried the lawyer in the same patronizing way.

"I have private matters of necessity," glancing uneasily, motioning in the direction of the opening, "and your movements being uncertain, I deemed it best to take you at your word, by my Dan'l, so as the mountain wouldn't, or couldn't come to Mahomet, he has to come to the mountain."

Squint looked warily at the objectionable doors, placed his finger upon his lips as a warning, and then rising, closed them with a deep apology, and shrill rebuke from within. At once the demeanor of both men changed. There were short statements and quick replies, with growling and snarling on both sides.

"I tell you it can be done," said the client, emphatically.

"And I tell you I'm not going to join in any such business," came with a shade less of emphasis from the other side, as though open to conviction. "I don't mind most things, but I know what the law terms a conspiracy, and I know the penalty."

"You are a coward. I've known you to do worse things."

"Slowly, not so fast, my friend. This is a little beyond my venture. But what is your scheme? repeat it—there—not so loudly."

"They are coming to the city soon; I found that out to-day." Then, branching off, "it will require a trip to Paris. Ha! Squint, that will suit you, eh! It must be done soon; the train must be properly laid; no lagging. As for the widow, *we* can personate her, can't we. Ha! ha! ha!"

"Come, come," said the lawyer, "and be a little more explicit. This is no time to laugh."

"Bah! I never felt in a better humor in my life," chuckled the pawnbroker, still more merrily.

"Stop all this nonsense, and talk seriously, or I'll have nothing to do with it. I'd like to know where all the money's to come from, unless, 'sneeringly,' your generous coffers are to furnish it, which would be a most exceptionable rule to your ordinary close-fistedness; I presume you have weighed all these things well. People can't go to Paris for nothing."

"Money! always money!" snarled the other. "I suppose you have conveniently forgotten the little sum betwixt us. A slight debt of gratitude let's call it; a trivial matter, which need not be returned with interest, you know, and maybe something less than the principal."

"Curse your impudence! If I'd known you were coming to dun——" cried the irate attorney.

"Stop, stop; don't get angry. There's no necessity.

Let the little matter between us rest, for the present. Listen, I have a project that will work. He! he! stop, stop," holding up his hand deprecatingly. "I'll tell you! I will make the enemy furnish the wherewithal to prosecute the campaign."

"The Devil we will! I might have sworn that it wouldn't come from you. Go on; don't poke along so slowly. Come to the point."

"They are coming to town, as I told you," said the other, more steadily. "Sir John never allows mention of his brother's name in the household, and has been much depressed since his death, but still never permits allusion to the forbidden subject."

"You cunning old rascal, and how did you find out all that?"

"I have it from Rosey—from Rosey of the Varieties, *you know, you've* seen her—the daughter of the Wentworth Innkeeper. She has a sister with whom she keeps up regular but clandestine communication, for the country lassie's character must not be smirched by contact. Dolly, this sister, is intimate with the housekeeper at Carleton Park, and is quite voluble in her information when properly led, and—and this is one of my channels."

"What put all this into your head?" said the lawyer. "Is it gain, or something else hidden away?" continuing in a lighter vein; "Well, it's not my province to inquire, and I think the idea is excellent, and, with certain contingent circumstances, will probably succeed."

But we must not commit ourselves absolutely, at least, *I* must not. How are 'the enemy' to supply the exchequer?"

"In this way," said the old man, "we'll work upon the young lady's tender feelings. Leave that to me, and don't peer too narrowly into the course I may pursue, since you have doubts and misgivings of your personal safety."

"Enough! enough! I'm satisfied," cried the other, seeing the ill effects of his former animadversion, and well pleased at the glittering prospects offered to view. "I care not for your motive; so let's to work."

Writing materials were now produced, and the two worthies laid their heads together. The outcome thereof was the production of a neatly composed letter in imitation of a female's hand. Squint was an excellent penman and copyist. Indeed, this unenviable acquirement had got him into notoriety and misfortune before now. Both parties were highly satisfied with their several allotted tasks, which, by all rules of calculation, were to redound to their mutual advantage, and after some further deliberation and adjustment of details, the pawnbroker carefully placed the directed missive in a secure receptacle and sallied forth.

CHAPTER. X.

RICHARD'S DISCOMFITURE.

THE pawnbroker paused for a moment under a hair-dresser's window; the man had counted out his change, a good ending for the week's work, and was at the point of extinguishing the lights and putting up the shutters, delaying in his task to allow the passer to examine the time.

"Hi! Hi!" exclaimed the old man, as pulling out a silver watch, a former pledge (not of affection) and seeing the hour: "Hi, Hi, so late! I thought I should have to wait past twelve." Coming to a dreary locality, he peered anxiously around, and catching sight of Slummer's Dick beneath the shadow of a lamp, cried, in a confidential tone, "Richard! Richard."

"Here I am," returned the lad in a reciprocal voice, and advancing.

"Richard, I perceive you are punctual, I like promptness. Let us find a more quiet spot so we can converse to better advantage without fear of interruption, ah; here is a fit place," and, retreating a few yards, he entered a low dingy court with narrow outlet, into which scarce a ray of light penetrated.

"What noise is that?" said the old man.

"Nothing but a cab, sir, there's no one hereabouts this time o' night," replied the youth.

“Are you sure, Richard? Just peep out to make certain.”

Richard turned, projecting his head and neck beyond the enclosure; but that turn and espial were wrought with the direst consequences for him. Before the lad was aware of any fell design, he received a tremendous blow on the nape of the neck from the stout stick nimbly wielded by his treacherous friend. Again and again the blows descended in rapid succession on the head, back and shoulders, whilst with every stroke to give it greater force, as he danced about his victim, the old wretch would exclaim, “I’m old am I? You underpaid, overworked scoundrel. The police will catch me, eh, will they?” These expressions were mingled with interjections yelled at the top of his voice, “murder! watch! help! help! murder! watch!” not failing to jerk the coins—previously placed there—from his pocket, scattering them upon the ground; then last but not least threw down the knife borrowed from his dupe, the blade open, having managed to prick his hand with it—making this as well as the money a sacrifice for the end in view.

Stunned and wholly discomfited at the sudden and unexpectedness of the onset, Richard was too confused either to guard against, or repel the attack; and by the time he had gotten well cudgelled, the night constable made a tardy appearance, into whose arms the beaten youth unconsciously rushed.

The population of the neighborhood, male and female,

attracted by the piercing outcries, hastily rushed to the scene of disturbance, whilst in every direction raising of windows, and questions and answers of all descriptions were screeched from dwelling to dwelling.

Before many moments elapsed, a motley crowd of men, boys, and women had assembled at the spot, where they found the old man grovelling upon the ground as if in the last agonies of death, and "Slummer's Dick" in the hands of the watch.

It was some time before the supposed murdered man could be made to understand these were friends around, and not thieves, during which he kept up the most piteous calls for help. When partially quieted, and, as for the first time since the attack, casting his eyes upon Richard he again fell back, covering his face with his hands and rolling from side to side, screaming as though in the utmost terror.

"That's he; take him away, help! help! he'll kill me;" then partially recovering, "My good people, hold him fast, you know not what prodigious strength he possesses." With this the bystanders were about to lay hold on and assist the watchman, whilst others plied the wounded man with questions.

"What is the matter?" said one, as with the assistance of half a dozen others he helped the old man to rise. "Did he rob and then try to kill you?" for a lamp had been brought and the coins discovered, most of which quickly disappeared in the pockets of those who seemed most sympathetic.

"Yes, good people," said the injured man, rubbing his elbows and knees with many contortions. "Hold him fast, hold him fast. He is a double-dyed villain." Then, growing courageous, "though I struggled with him. my trusty cane," shaking it with great satisfaction, "saved my life, I believe. Oh dear, he has nearly killed me. See, there is his knife. I caught it in my hand, or it would have ended me."

Here he exhibited the self-inflicted wounds which, by dint of much unseen pinching had been made to bleed. "The scoundrel, but I will have the law of him yet."

The throng pressed round the old man in pity.

"He's worse nor Dick Turpin," said one, "robbin' an' murderin' good folks in the 'ighway. An old man, too. For shame, young 'un, you'll hang for this, if there be law in the land."

The cab, which had been heard in the distance, now came up, its occupant being no other than Rufus Applegarth, returning from Mr. Cashbid's on the way to his lodgings. Attracted by the confusion, he stopped, and fancying that a physician might be required, pushed through the crowd, demanding "if any one was hurt?"

During all this time Richard's amazement had been so great, added to his bruised condition, that he scarcely realized what had happened, and now for the first time as his eye caught that of the surgeon, found voice to protest.

"I didn't do it at all, it's a lie, a big lie. It was he who beat *me*."

"Look in his pockets," exclaimed the old man, "and see if he has 'nt a sovereign and some half crowns with a hole punched through them. I always mark my pieces — and here's his knife, too."

The policeman made the required search and, sure enough, there were the coins with the described marks — the same so generously presented to him by his quondam friend.

No more conclusive proof than this was needed, and so the lad was borne off with a strong grip, amid his loud denials and the jeers of the crowd.

Offers of assistance to the seeming victim were profusely made, but refused, until a calm voice close beside him said: "I have a cab here and will convey you home should you not be able to walk."

Moses Mosler looked askant at this new comer, a vague feeling of uneasiness came over him, as muffling his cloak tightly around him and replacing his hat which had been lost in the melée, he stammered out a refusal.

Applegarth caught a mere glimpse of the matted white beard and hair. "Surely he had seen that face before. But where?" Recollection at this point was a blank. He came nearer, but the other rapidly moved off and the throng began to disperse. Hesitating a moment the surgeon took a few rapid strides and came up to the old man, and asked: "Hav'nt I met you before?"

Receiving no answer, the question was repeated.

Without slacking his pace, and with his face buried in the folds of his garment, the old man replied, by a single monosyllable, in the negative.

Repulsed by this obvious desire of avoidance, Applegarth re-entered his cab, and as he was driven under the rays of the lamp, the retreating figure, which had barely reached the opposite side, half wheeled round to examine whither his questioner had gone. In doing this he loosened his wrap, and, for an instant, the two men were in plain view of each other, the bright gleams of light falling full upon their faces. A strange, unaccountable sickness of heart came over Rufus Applegarth, and to the old man a fearful, and prophetic feeling of approaching evil.

CHAPTER XI.

A DREAM.

SOME weeks after this, Lord St. Maur and Captain Trevellyan, returning late from a hard day's distant shooting, were seated after dinner, their chairs turned toward a cheerful blaze, with glasses and wine decanters between them.

St. Maur, with the exception of a few days' confinement to his room — thanks to youth and a strong constitution — had easily regained his wonted vigor, though the present day's tramp had proved too much, and he had been obliged at intervals to rest.

Trevellyan, continuing their conversation, said: "I tell you what, old fellow, this has been a tough spell, and will teach you a lesson — not to ride so recklessly again. Remember the adage, 'experience is a most excellent master.'"

"And a fool who learns thereby," remarked the other.

"You think so, because you nail up your colors to float gallantly at last — that is, in the opinion of those whom one would care to have. For instance, Fensby, who was never a favorite, when he so grossly insulted poor Casten whom everybody liked, and shot him at the word as if he relished it, every one shunned and

avoided the fellow, and would have nothing to do with him; while you were the only man, who stood by and defended him, yet when it leaked out that he picked the quarrel to conceal and avoid the scandal of a lady's slandered reputation, none of us thought we could do him too much honor."

"Yes, I remember Fensby was very poor, and his pride was even greater than his poverty. He would have died before seeking sympathy, or advancing confidence that was not sought; he was sensitive and with scarcely a friend, but the true instincts of a gentleman. I saw this and knew there must be something behind it all that only wanted a few kind words to disclose. I was not mistaken, and though it has thrown a cloud over his whole life, yet I don't believe there is a braver or more true-hearted fellow than Fensby. It was one of those incidents, or experiences, as you have just cited, that teach us a few of life's bitter lessons."

"It *was* a sad affair and every one justifies him now; but don't become cynical; Erroll, don't expatiate upon the philosophy of life. Your existence, to my mind, has been laid in remarkably agreeable and pleasant places. You have one of the oldest titles and finest estates in the county; when you go into society, you receive the lion's share of attention. You have made your mark in "the Lords," and are considered a clever, rising man in that House. You are popular, with many friends, and they increase their number if you would. Then that clever article of yours in the last *Quarterly*

created quite a sensation. More than all, I've heard your name mentioned for high office in the Government, and I suppose if you accept it, we'll all have to give way, and you'll be more petted and flattered than ever."

"It is very good of you to say so many kind things, though your feelings bias your judgment, and I rather suspect the wish is father to the thought. I have nothing to complain of from society, except that it is a great bore. I doubt if I shall be in town this season."

"Not come to London!" cried the Guardsman, in the utmost astonishment, "what's the matter? You never missed before; and pray, what's to become of *me*? I'm only tolerated because considered a kind of head keeper of the Lion, which rises up and lies down at my suggestion; whereas, if they did but know what a lot of coaxing it required, I hardly think I should be held in such high favor."

"Well, I'm obliged," returned St. Maur, "for inducing me to alter my intentions, and particularly for making yourself the scapegoat when it's for *my* good. There are many pleasant things attached to an ancient title and corresponding revenues, yet at the same time there are a good many drawbacks. There is no fun in having a half dozen mothers continually running after one, and, in a left handed sort of way, describing in glowing colors the excellent — though heretofore undiscovered — traits and qualities of a numerous and various female

progeny. If you don't propose, their respective families are miffed and not calmed until next season affords other and better opportunities. If you should propose, besides doing a very foolish thing, you make enemies of all the others — until your wife settles down into giving parties. There are many girls, you know, who wish for high station and handsome establishments, and only a few can obtain these. So the rest spend their best years in a vain endeavor, then become faded, soured and disappointed, finally condescending to marry Factory or Merchant magnates, and the world hears that they are very happy. So passing out of our existence, forgotten until we are in later days reminded, by meeting their children in some outlandish place, where they have no bed of roses to lie upon."

"What you say is very true, and coming from you, I know is neither vanity nor egotism. We all see it. So is the world made up, and we must take it as it is. Most men like being run after, and, because *you* are so indifferent, they victimize you the more: Women respect a cold, indifferent man. Respect with some personal acquaintance, soon becomes admiration, and admiration deepens into love. As for me, I fall in love a dozen times a year and out of it, half as often. But gracious! *they* don't mind that. Rather like it, I fancy."

"You are lucky, Audley. With all its advantages, it's an intolerable nuisance to be placed in a position where one can't speak with freedom, where each trivial

action is talked of and discussed; as regards myself, I am not such a goose as to think that *in* me lay any attractions, further than most other men possess, but all who have position and fortune have similar annoyances to contend with. As you say, some like it, others don't; *my* wish is to be cared for, not for any outward surroundings, but for myself."

"Don't you place too high an estimate upon 'outward surroundings,' and not sufficient upon yourself, Erroll? You can't suppose I mean flattery, we have known each other too long for that," and his voice softened, "but were I a woman, you are the very man I should fall in love with; the only person I ever saw who valued so lowly his own powers."

"I know," replied St. Maur warmly, "that I have many advantages and blessings, but, above them all, I esteem your friendship most. You cannot know how often, in my saddest hours, you have come up before me, with your cheerful disposition and unselfish feelings. Then I have looked on the bright side and seen how much good there was in life, if one only possessed the 'Open Sesame,' to discover it. There, I will stop, nor resolve ourselves into a mutual admiration society."

"No fear of that; I tell you what, you must rouse yourself and not disappoint the expectations which have been formed of you. I know that you don't care for what is called 'society,' or, rather are wearied of what interests most men. But the world of State Diplomacy lies before you, inviting you with open

arms, and you will pass into it as water finds its level. Time out of mind your family have made their mark, and you will scarcely be an exception. One of these days, I shall see you high in the Government, whilst my fate, in the course of time may be to get a Majority in my regiment, and I shall gleefully pass on to a happy old age of single blessedness."

"The pretty faces of the coquettes are well enough, Audley, and no one likes them better than I, in their proper place. You must own that, sooner or later, one wearies of them, and one has to think of a companion for a lifetime. I like to see a woman reserved and not affected in manner or mind, who will be the same in the quiet hours of home life as in the turmoil of society. A girl brought up under good and loving influences, and not spoken of by every man familiarly, whose name is not bruited about at the clubs, nor her every attribute discussed, decisions passed upon each as though they were a race horse. She should be brought up to womanhood in that modesty and comparative retirement which alone gives purity of thought, truthfulness of purpose, and refinement of character."

With this, Lord St. Maur got up, lit a fresh cigar and then resumed his seat. He had spoken more fervently than usual and, may be, even more so than the occasion warranted. It was certainly a change from his general indifference, and Trevellyn could not help remark it as he replied:

"I fully agree with you, but, my dear fellow, the

women you describe are rarely if ever to be found. One would have to search for them with a lantern, like Diogenes, and the search might prove as futile. Such women make the happy and proud mothers whom men esteem. St. Maur, you have an ideal which at some time each of us may have imagined."

"No ideal, Trevellyn. There *are* such women, but men rarely take the time and trouble to discover them, even could they, through their selfish, perverted tastes, recognize them when found."

Unperceived, for St. Maur was shading his brow, Trevellyn contemplated his friend's face, and read an undefined something which gave a strange thrill through his mind, or rather, a sharp pang. He thought, was another to stand between them? Were the old fond associations to be broken? Why not, if what he had looked forward to as the crowning point of his friend's life—a woman worthy of his love—and that love returned with equal fervor. He had marked a change coming over St. Maur of late, but attributed it to fancy, now it was clear.

To others it was St. Maur, the noble and wealthy earl; but to *him*, only Erroll, the boy, the man whom he had cared for right well, and loved all his life, and whose affection was *all* to him. There was, he knew, a woman's soft touch in this. A gentle, loving woman's hand, and Trevellyn now first surmised it. What would be the end? If love came to this cold, proud, but sensitive man's heart, it would be joy or sorrow, hell or heaven.

Probably he would have no difficulty in winning any woman whom they met in the broad circles of society, but the woman who would attract St. Maur's attention must differ much from these; from such a woman it might require more, and she might be difficult to win. A revolution of feeling swept over Trevellyan, and finally he said, his voice having an altered, hollow tone.

"Erroll, you have spoken to-night of women and marriage differently from what I have been accustomed to hear. Generally, you have left the merits of the subject, as well as the ceremony, to those who liked it. I am glad to see that you at last admit there are exceptions to your views of women, gathered from our present day experience."

"Don't mistake me, Audley. I do not mean to utter a word that could in the slightest degree be regarded as derogatory of woman. Still, I have avoided what is called falling in love, as I would a dangerous rock in the sea of life. One knows not at what time they, with their still more frail and precious burden, may be wrecked upon breakers that only appear when fairly started on the voyage. I have seen so many lives broken, with unutterable anguish, by the influence and acts of vain and silly women. Yet, I believe firmly that women are far superior to our own sex. But, for the worst of human kind, commend me to a vicious, vain and silly woman."

"Your sentiments on this subject," replied Trevellyan,

catching the lighter mood, "are much the same as mine, and I feel their truthfulness, whilst our deeds differ. *I* sip the sweets from every flower, not caring whence it comes or how it was cultivated. *You*, though amused for the moment, are repelled, unless its utter purity be apparent. But I shall not keep you up longer, for, no doubt, you are wearied and tired, even as I am. I wish you could have kept up to-day and had as good sport as myself, though I believe you enjoyed my pleasure more than your own. I must be off early in the morning, and have taken the privilege of ordering the cart for that purpose."

"I am sorry you are going," said St. Maur. "I wish heartily you could make a longer stay. Come whenever you have an opportunity. I feel better and brighter after your visits, and will promise finer sport, if anything, than we had to-day, for I shall be able to stalk with you."

"I should very much like to remain," rejoined Trevellyan. "I am sufficiently at home not to stand upon ceremony or wait for an invitation, but I've overstayed my time now. Some of the Mess are waiting my return, for their own leaves. It is not much duty we do, but I must take my turn punctually when it comes. You must come down for the season, or I shall be up after you, though I suppose others of more consequence will see to that. So, good night and good-by."

St. Maur, on reaching his chamber, threw himself listlessly down, lost in reverie. His face was haggard,

the eye restless, yet wearied. This could not be physical suffering. Unconsciously his lips gave utterance to the thoughts within:

"I will strive," he muttered. "I will try as man never tried before, and with God's help, will win." He bowed his head lowly for a moment, then rose, and with a firm, happy smile upon his face, and retiring into an adjoining boudoir, where was an open desk, strewn with writing material, he wrote for hours, until casting down the pen, he walked noiselessly across the passage to Trevellyan's chamber, and shading the light, stood by the sleeping man's side gazing into the unconscious face. The Guardsman was dreaming uneasily; his arms at moments were thrown violently about, and he murmured brokenly and uneasily, at times excitedly. "There, there, quick; I say, for God's sake, be quick! Better love — hath no man — than this — that he lay — down — his — life — for a friend."

Then he turned uneasily upon the other side and seemed quieted, and the old bright, happy smile came back. After watching a moment longer, St. Maur was about to retreat in the same manner he had come, when his foot struck a chair, which fell to the floor with a crash. Mechanically he turned his head to see if the sleeper was aroused. He had not time to realize the effect, for Trevellyan sprang violently from the bed, brushing his arm across his eyes, his massive frame shaking as by some great convulsion; drops of perspi-

ration stood out upon his forehead, whilst his features had a startled look of horror and surprise.

"My God, Erroll, is that you?" he exclaimed.

"Yes; I came in for a moment to see if you were resting well. You've been dreaming. It has quite upset you."

"Dreaming, have I?" He appeared to collect his scattered senses, and with a sigh of relief, "Thank God, it was only a dream." And as if to make sure, he passed his hand over St. Maur, who repeated:

"Yes; been dreaming."

"I see I have," he replied, as if a great weight were lifted. Again the shudder seemed to creep over him. "But, Erroll, as long as I live, I want no more such dreams. How vivid it was. We were at a great fire, and—and some were in extreme peril, and you and I—and two were burned to death. But psha!" with extreme disgust, "I'll tell no more. It's not worth the breath consumed." Then resuming his natural boyish manner: "What foolish things dreams are. I always fancy I'm a general or field marshal, with lots of tin and no end of fun. I'm quite sure *that* will never come to pass. Though I've heard say that one dream in a man's life *must* come true. I wonder if that's so. Look here! you've knocked over my clothes and watch. Let's see what's the time. Why, it's five o'clock. Well, I'll get up, as I have to be off at six; but," glancing at the other's dress, which showed no signs of disarrangement, "*you* haven't been to bed.

Writing? The same old thing; or rather, I'll wager you've commenced something new."

"Yes," he replied, slightly embarrassed, "I have passed a few hours scribbling, as the inspiration was never stronger, and the ideas coming quick and fast, I deemed it best to jot them down."

"*Chacun a son gout*," repeated the Captain, as he dressed himself. "I sincerely wish I could do the same. But don't stay up for me," regarding him with some concern. "You look tired—and worn out." He was going to say, miserable and suffering. "I hope, in the future, your inspirations will come in the daytime, and not at night."

"I shall take some rest now," answered St. Maur. "Remember my request,"—he had spoken of it during the day,—“about Mr. Applegarth. Put his name down at the club, and show him some attention. I will come up for a short time, if only for that purpose. He showed me kindness and did me a service, and these are things I never forget. I should like to see more of him and am sure you will be pleased with him."

CHAPTER XII.

THE GUARDSMAN CAPTIVATED.

RUFUS APPLGARTH had remained in London, taking advantage of Mr. Cashbid's invitation, in the candid manner extended, and became a frequent visitor. That gentleman, besides lavishing affection upon his niece, took quite a fancy to the American, and plied him continuously with questions about the States.

When away from these influences, Applegarth's fits of gloom continued. He took long, solitary walks, which generally had for their ending an obscure churchyard, where, among the graves, was a plain, weather-stained slab, simply marked, "Isabella, daughter of Philip Kirby. Born, ——. Died, ——."

It was after a return from one of these that he found a visitor had called, "Capt. Audley Trevellyan," as his card stated, leaving a verbal message that he would return again at five o'clock, which he did, making matters plain by a re-introduction, with an explanation of the liberty taken.

"You must dine with me," he said; "I am just on my way to the club, and all alone."

The doctor was drawn away from himself by the other's frank and manly bearing, and readily acquiesced.

They were strolling leisurely along when, with an account book of the day's sales under his arm, Mr. Cashbid loomed up in front. Shaking hands with both, and speaking familiarly to the captain, for Mr. Cashbid knew everybody worth knowing, and *vice versa*, those worth knowing were not allowed to escape his acquaintance.

"Where are you young gentlemen going — going — going?" he cried. "To the Club, I'll be bound. Change your minds and take 'pot luck' with me. I've some excellent port, and claret that will stand the test. Mrs. Cashbid will be delighted to see you. It was only the other day she was saying she had not set eyes upon Capt. Trevellyan since she met him at Brighton — going, going, going."

Mrs. Cashbid was not one of the upper ten, yet languished upon the outskirts of that select circle, not visiting ladies, but like her husband, knowing the men; and nothing delighted her more than a drive in the park, an occasional conversation at the carriage door, or the coming of some one to dine.

"I asked Dr. Applegarth," said the captain, "for a quiet dinner at the club, but as this later invitation is fraught with so much more pleasure, I am sure we are too thankful to turn a deaf ear upon fortune."

"Mr. Cashbid has been so kind and hospitable," answered the surgeon, "that I believe it has been the main reason of my stay in town. I should have felt lost without his house to go to, and have only been afraid of trespassing too much."

“Why,” said the auctioneer, appealing to Trevellyan, “to show you his backwardness, I have been begging him to take up his quarters with me, but can’t induce — going, going — I desire to learn so much about America, but can’t think of the questions I want to ask until after he has left, and by the next time I meet him they are — going, going — gone out of my head, and never come back until he has left again.”

They had walked briskly along and arrived at the house. Trevellyan wondered how these two, though strangers, apparently knew each other so well, but good breeding forbade inquiry.

“Captain Trevellyan!” cried the agreeably surprised lady of the house, advancing most graciously with extended hand, “I am so glad to see you, and it’s been so long since we met; I remember now, it was at the Rifles’ ball, at Brighton. Let me introduce you to our niece. Bessie, this is Captain Trevellyan, of the Guards.”

Bessie, who had remained shyly in the background, now came forward, and before half a dozen sentences were uttered, felt perfectly at home with the stranger, whose manners were open and easy. She looked very pretty, which she was, with only a few buds placed in her shining hair. Bessie was one who, by her thoughtful unselfishness and natural manners, attracted every one. Mrs. Cashbid was already anxious and willing to lavish anything and everything upon her, and it was only by a firm, yet mild and persuasive way, that she

exercised a constraint that would otherwise have decked her in all the costly colors of the rainbow, comprised in silk, satins and ribbons, the symptoms extending so far as jewelry.

"I declare," said Trevellyan, after they were seated at table, himself supporting and confidentially addressing the hostess, with reference to something she had just spoken, "I think you are extremely fortunate to have discovered such a lovely, charming person as your niece."

"Yes, indeed, Captain Trevellyan, 'tis the best piece of fortune we ever had. I can't see how we ever did without her. I would not give her up for worlds, and you say you never heard about it? Well, I must tell you, it's so strange, and has made us so very happy," and then in lowered terms she explained the whole history. Bessie, conversing with her uncle and friend, could not hear, but could tell by their repeated glances they were talking of her, and it was anything but pleasant to know a stranger was being regaled with her family history. Yet, she loved her aunt, and surely it met with full return; but why couldn't she do it, if at all, at some other time and place? The color mounted to her cheeks, which lent an additional charm, and though Trevellyan was rather annoyed by the confidence, it gave greater impulse to an already awakened interest.

"Captain Trevellyan, what are you and my good wife conversing about all this time. You are entirely neglecting the claret, which is some of Carbonell's

particular. Empty your glasses and refill, and pass the bottle, for we are going to drink Bessie's health."

"With all my heart," cried Trevellyan. "Miss Egerton, I drink to your good health, truly wishing you all happiness in life." He had never drank with more alacrity, or with a deeper wish for its fulfillment. "This is excellent wine," he continued, "and perhaps I can't give you as good, but we have some fine Burgundy in our military Mess, and you and Dr. Applegarth must come down and dine with me. I shall take no refusal, so name the day."

He had suddenly desired to become upon terms of greater intimacy with this family. It was not his province or privilege to invite Mrs. Cashbid into society, but her husband might be his guest.

The auctioneer was ever ready to accept either a business or social bid, and readily came into the arrangement, naming the following Wednesday.

"Wednesday it shall be," said the Guardsman, "without fail; and I tell you what we'll do: we shall have a box at the opera that night, and take the ladies. Mrs. Cashbid, won't you support my plan of the campaign?"

The lady could not have been more delighted. To be at the opera in company with the gay, aristocratic Guardsman, and his friends to come to the box. She could scarcely dream of such distinction—nor of its cause.

"To be sure," she cried, "it's the very thing. What

a nice time we can have, and just what I wished for Bessie," who was doubly pleased, and with all her demure behavior, took a sly glance at the author of the programme.

"Just the thing," said her uncle, jumping to his feet. "Another glass of wine, gentlemen, to seal the compact. Wednesday I'll be with you, and at the opera with the ladies afterwards."

Everybody seemed immeasurably pleased, even Applegarth joining in the mirth.

"What do *you* say, Miss Egerton?" said Trevellyan, every moment more attracted and friendly; "you have neither approved nor objected."

"Oh! I should like it above all things," she replied. "I have read operas, but never seen one, and imagine they must be charming."

"That's the best of all," cried the captain gleefully, "just think of going to an opera with a young lady who has never been in a theatre! How lucky I am! Half the fellows I know would give their best leave for such a piece of fortune."

"Oh, but Captain Trevellyan," answered Bessie, blushing and feeling quite awkward, "you must make up your mind not to laugh at me, or, much as I should love to go, I will have to stay away."

"Laugh at *you*, Miss Egerton? Nothing could be further from my mind. A fellow who sees himself envied by every other man, besides being very happy, cannot feel like laughing at a lady. I fear I shall

be so serious as to go down on my knees and thank you for such a treat. You don't know what a bore it is to go with people who only care to be seen, or stare at others, and who scarcely look upon the stage unless the prima donna be on."

Upon repairing to the parlor after dinner, the arrangements were discussed and finally decided upon. The Guardsman left, specially elated at the prospect, and wrote to St. Maur that night that he had seen Dr. Applegarth, and spent a very pleasant evening in his company, incidentally mentioning where, but with not a word of the ladies, concluding with, "I greatly wish you would join us on Wednesday. Come down for a day or two, particularly if you desire to do what is civil, for Dr. Applegarth speaks of returning to America. I cannot make out what his intentions are, as one instant he talks one way, and the next another. His mind appears brooding upon some subject, that I can hardly believe to be pleasant, though at times he lightens up and is cheerful enough. If I thought it were money, I would not hesitate to tell you, but it cannot be that, as I understand he is comfortably off, and is in some connection with Sir John Carleton. Be that as it may, do try to come."

St. Maur received the letter in due time, and obeyed its summons in person.

CHAPTER XIII.

AT THE OPERA.

ON the appointed day Mr. Cashbid dined at the Guards' Mess, where St. Maur and the younger son of a duke, together with several honorables, were of the company. It was not a grand set-out, but an impromptu party, as Trevellyan explained. Mr. Cashbid felt very comfortable, indeed he had never felt better, and was in a condition to enjoy the opera, or anything else that might conveniently turn up for his delectation.

St. Maur, when not engaged with Applegarth, devoted himself to the auctioneer, with the utmost success. He saw that Trevellyan must have some special reason for paying him attentions, or how could he otherwise account for thus thrusting such a vulgar person upon his associates.

It was satisfactorily agreed that Trevellyan and Mr. Cashbid should drive the ladies to the theatre, where St. Maur and Applegarth were to join them. Soon after the party were seated in a spacious proscenium box.

Mr. Cashbid, thanks to fate, was very little with them; he was mostly in the lobbies, chatting in the most animated style with various gentlemen of his

acquaintance. His wife was in her glory, with one regret excepted — what a pity it was not “the season!” She sat a shining mark for public gaze. Bessie modestly retired further back, simply commanding a full view of the stage, her single annoyance being the frequent interruptions made by Mrs. Cashbid in whispering questions behind her fan of “Who was this?” or “who was not that?” and “Bessie, do look here, I want to show you something!” the something being an opera cloak, new hat, or anything not in connection with the opera.

St. Maur had taken a position behind Bessie’s chair, and was amused and pleased at the frequent *naïve* expressions of surprise or delight at the shifting scenes — but he was all the while dreaming of a face with soft brown eyes and wavy chestnut hair. His was no sentimental passion. He would stake his existence for a word, a smile. A rapturous yearning had taken possession of his senses. Call it love; call it what you may, *it was there*. Tender hope nestled close beside it — hope which, at times, alone makes life endurable. Whatever disappointments, or unrealized wishes betide, it is Hope that sustains the spirit through depression and doubt.

Whilst his thoughts were thus engaged, his attention was attracted by a party entering one of the opposite boxes. Their presence was almost entirely concealed by the heavy curtains in front. Between these and the bright-colored wall was a small opening formed by

the hanging of the drapery. Upon this spot his eyes were riveted. Every pulse seemed to stand still, his very heart to cease beating, and then with sudden reaction send the blood rushing, thrilling through his veins.

“Miss Egerton, would you lend me your lorgnette a moment?” His voice was unusually calm, but his hand trembled. Bessie was too much engaged with the play to notice this. A woman in the world of society could not have failed to observe and mark it. The opera glass literally quivered in his hand. It was Lucille Carleton—ever in his thoughts—often in his dreams.

Might this emotion, this love be called new—love at first sight, which, strong in its purity, stamps itself in burning characters upon the soul? He knows not the reasoning: sufficient it was love.

“Is that Dr. Applegarth across there?” said Mrs. Cashbid, straining her eyes. “Why, he was here a moment ago. I can just make out,” raising her glass, “it’s a lady and gentleman. Who can it be he’s with? Do *you* know, Lord St. Maur?”

“It is Sir John Carleton. He is my neighbor in the country.”

“Sir John Carleton?” said Bessie, for the first time raising her eyes from the performance, “why, it was at his place Dr. Applegarth said that you were hurt, when he first met you.”

“There, Bessie, broke in Mrs. Cashbid, “do look just

behind the curtain; you can catch a glimpse of the lady. Who is she, Captain Trevellyan?"

"I scarcely know them. You will have to ask St. Maur. They are next neighbors of his."

The Guardsman had been sufficiently occupied in the pleasant task of looking at and admiring one of the occupants of their own box, and was plainly not going to allow his attention to be diverted.

"Lord St. Maur, will you tell us who that lovely lady is?" asked the inquisitive matron.

St. Maur felt worried at what he thought, in this instance, rather rude curiosity, and was angry for permitting himself to be placed in the society of such an ill-bred woman. But then, it was to please Trevellyan.

"It is Miss Carleton," he replied.

Bessie was silent for awhile, but once or twice turned and inadvertently caught his gaze, steadfastly fastened. Mrs. Glover's homely advice about her own courtship suddenly occurred to her mind. Presently she said, too low to disturb the others:

"Would you tell me her name, I should like to know?"

"Miss Carleton's?"

"Yes."

"Lucille," he answered, coloring.

"Lucille," she repeated. "What a pretty name!"

"You like it?"

"Yes, there's something very soft and sweet about it; don't you think so?"

"It is very pretty."

"Do you know her very well?"

"Scarcely at all."

"She has a remarkably fine face," raising her glass.
"Just the sort of person one would imagine the name to suggest; a being, better—as she is fairer—than ourselves."

"You can scarcely judge of her by the present light. She is one of the loveliest women I ever saw."

At this moment the curtain went down.

Sir John had met Rufus Applegarth in the lobby upon entering, and linking arms, insisted upon his accompanying him, turning a cold shoulder—if such were possible—upon the snubbed auctioneer.

"Are you here alone?" said Sir John.

"No, I am with friends just there," nodding the direction.

"Not with the woman in glaring ribbons?"

"Yes; that is Mrs. Cashbid."

"The pretty girl on her left," continued the Baronet, "is certainly not her daughter?"

"No, that is Miss Egerton. This is her first night at any theatre, which you will probably see by observing her rapt attention. I told you of her coming from America with me."

"The young lady you were speaking of?"

"Yes."

"She is very pretty, papa?" said Lucille.

"Yes," responded he. Then addressing Applegarth, asked, "who are the gentlemen?"

"Lord St. Maur and Captain Trevellyan."

Lucille uttered not a word. Of course she was listening intently to the music. She had recognized one before.

"How has he gotten?"

"Oh, very well; scarcely an ache."

"Where did you pick up the ribboned dame? What is her name — Mrs. Cashbid — oh, yes; I recollect something about it now. Aunt of the girl; *that's* the attraction."

"Dr. Applegarth, I very much admire your young friend, and would like to know her," said Lucille.

"I will bring her to call upon you, if Sir John will permit me?"

"Certainly! Lucille has been peculiarly situated, without companions of her own age, and I want her to have some, whom she may invite to Carleton Park."

"Papa, I should like it above all things if you would let me invite her down, Dr. Applegarth has told me so much about her."

"My child, I did not know that you desired the company of any one. I should only be too glad for you to have friends of your own age."

"Bessie," said Rufus Applegarth, coming back, "Miss Lucille and Sir John Carleton have requested me to bring you to them; if you will come, I am sure your aunt will not object. Miss Lucille is a sweet girl, whom I know you will love."

"I shall be very glad to go," said she, "if I wont miss any of the music," and she hesitated, looking at her aunt for approval.

That lady was secretly chagrined at not being included in the invitation, and it struck her it would be decidedly better if the Baronet should come to them; this would form the climax of her glory.

Rufus Applegarth explained, as delicately as possible, this was out of the question, for from Sir John Carleton's great wealth and high position, people readily gave way to him what they might not in others.

"Well, Bessie, my dear, I expect you had better go then," concluded her aunt, with a sigh of regret, as Bessie followed Dr. Applegarth through the lobbies.

"This is, or rather was, my little charge," he said, introducing Bessie.

The Baronet took her by the hand, almost affectionately, in a way that completely won her heart, and said tenderly, "My child, this is my daughter. I want you to know each other and become fast friends."

At these kindly words all reserve and constraint vanished, and before parting, which was not until the close of the opera, it was understood that at no distant day she was to come to Carleton Park, if her uncle permitted.

They lingered a few minutes in the vestibule, Sir John speaking to St. Maur, whilst Trevellyan was escorting Mrs. Cashbid, who was loth to part with Bessie even for a few weeks.

St. Maur seized the opportunity of at least being courteous, and said: "I am afraid Miss Carleton does not remember me?"

She knew he was there, yet *looked* surprised, as, coloring, she replied: "Oh! no, I am very glad to see you have gotten so well over your fall!"

"Many thanks to your first kindness, I have scarcely felt it."

Perfectly at ease in the crashing ball-room, or quiet ladies' boudoir, he was embarrassed now, and knew not what to say. She could not but see it, and said: "Did you like the opera this evening?"

This was spoken in her naturally distant manner, yet there was an indescribable sweetness, an untold depth of tenderness in the tone, that thrilled him with delight.

"Yes," he replied, "I have never enjoyed it so much before."

Others might have called it a meagre and poor mode of enjoyment; he could not conceal the earnestness of this answer.

"You are with Miss Egerton, are you not?"

"Yes."

He was lost again; yet how happy to be there, to speak to her—to hear her—eagerly to drink in every intonation.

"She has promised to come to Carleton Park, and papa," looking in that direction, "is asking her Aunt; I hope she wont refuse."

"Miss Egerton is a very charming, lovely girl," was all he could say.

"I think so, too," turning her face to his; "I like her so much."

St. Maur's heart beat the faster under that glance. He was more confused than ever. Where were the thousands of things he might say? He who was so collected, and possessed of such rare conversational powers. Where were all these? Swept from his mind as chaff before a whirlwind, and only the depths of his heart silently cried out, "I love you; I love you."

"Are you going to remain at Carleton Park?"

"Until the Season, when papa speaks of coming to town. The country is dreary at times, and I am very fond of town, and papa likes it occasionally."

"Do you often go to the opera?"

"No, I've had but few opportunities. We have not been in England a great while, and papa has not been very well. I suppose you are obliged to come down to the meeting of Parliament?"

"Not *obliged*. They can get along very well without me; perhaps better. I hope we may sometime meet here, if not in the country."

"Thank you."

St. Maur paused, awkwardly; there was no intimation that he might see her. Her father approached with the other party, signifying his victory over Mrs. Cashbid's opposition, and so there was no further opportunity, until he stood by the carriage door to hand her in.

"They smell very sweet," he said, alluding to a few flowers she held in her hand. How he coveted one of them!

"I am very fond of flowers. These are scarcely worth observing. Would you hold them a moment?" She gathered up her dress and gracefully stepped in after her father. St. Maur closed the door, standing by the window. Sir John was giving orders to the footman on the other side.

"I must bid you good by," and he held out his hand.

"Good night!" She looked up and gave him hers. With that touch and glance, a thrill of ecstasy entered his heart.

The carriage drove off, he turned away. A few buds were in his hand, valued above all the world to him. Carefully, tenderly, he placed them over his heart.

CHAPTER XIV.

THE SEASON.

LONDON'S season was at its height. Everything — everybody — was bright and gay.

Sir John Carleton had come, not for the brightness nor the gayeties. His pleasures were centered in his child, but he could not bear to see her perfectly isolated in the country from all amusements. In London, she would have the Park, the opera, the theatres, companions and various other amusements. He would always be with her and need not be annoyed by visitors. Society would scarcely have the hardihood to intrude unsolicited upon him.

Captain Trevellyan was going the old beaten rounds, simply intent upon pleasure, but there was a tenderer spot in his heart now than there had ever been before. Several times he had written to St. Maur, urging him by every inducement to come up, but to these received a negative reply, and was just about to run up to the Towers and try his personal persuasion when, upon entering the club in the evening, he was surprised to find his friend waiting for him.

“When did you come?” said the Captain, after the first surprise.

“A few hours ago, and came here to dine with you.”

"Come to stay?"

"Yes. Anything new?"

"Nothing especial. Lots of people asking about you, and I haven't known what answer to make. Plenty of cards for you. By the way, I see you have got an offer to be shipped abroad to the Colonies. Excellent position, too. What do you intend to do?"

"Refuse, I suppose. You know I don't care for that sort of thing, though I am glad to see I'm at least remembered. I had begun to think they had forgotten me. Seen anything of your friends, the Cashbids?"

"Yes, saw them last night;" and the Guardsman carelessly took a newspaper from the table, appearing, for the moment, to be deeply interested in it.

"Miss Egerton there still?"

"Yes, she lives there you know. But, come; let's have dinner;" and they repaired to the dining-room, where they were hardly seated when an Under Secretary espied St. Maur, and hastily leaving his own table, seated himself beside him, saying:

"Lord St. Maur, you here? Just the person I wanted to see. Lord Talboys"—the chief of his bureau—"wants to know who shall be returned from your borough to fill the vacancy. Have you decided upon any one? Your interest can name the man. Talboys must see you as early as possible in regard to it. Could you call to-night?"

"Not to-night."

"Well, then, at Downing street in the morning. I

promise you not to be kept waiting a moment. It will be a tight pull just now. We can't count too securely on our majority, and won't continue in office unless there is a fair showing of support from the Commons. If Sir John Carleton's Welsh interest could be secured?" This was said meditatively. "It would be a great help. He arrived in town last night."

"I don't think he cares for politics," answered St. Maur.

"Well, come in the morning at any rate."

Trevellyan thought it was a rather strange coincidence that St. Maur and the Baronet, naturally including Miss Carleton, should make their appearance simultaneously in town; and the Under Secretary was not a little surprised to learn, on the following day, that his Lordship had nothing of more importance the evening before than to witness the play. It was at variance with his usual conduct, and although St. Maur occupied his seat in the House of Lords, and was ever prepared with his good sense, ready tact and energetic labor to assist, and was making a high mark; favored above others, standing distinguished among his brother Peers, his name daily in the public prints and more often on the lips of the people, yet—strange infatuation—he preferred the opera and the different theatres to the political dinners, gay receptions and grand balls.

Sometimes rewarded by a glimpse of his inamorata, at other times going away in bitter disappointment. Could she have observed that silent admiration and

known his heart? He could never mortify a woman by showing or telling an emotion that might be distasteful. He could not thrust himself forward: rather a thousand times bear the passion deep in his soul. He could not go boldly and say: "I love you! come to my home! be my own!" There were preliminaries, which not only social, but God's greater law of nature demands and provides. There cannot be an immediate answer. The heart must first search out and find its own feelings. There must be a time, a place, an opportunity, to woo as well as to win.

CHAPTER XV.

THE MISSIVE.

LUCILLE CARLETON was busily embroidering with many-colored worsteds. Her thoughts were of the night before — of a handsome face, of a look that told a tender story — and a faint color flushed her cheek.

A servant told her there was a boy at the door who desired to speak to her, and had a note, which he insisted on placing in her own hands. She descended to the hall and saw an uncouth and repulsive youth, who familiarly handed her a note, which had been composed by the joint efforts of Mr. Squint and the Jew. It ran thus:

“MADEMOISELLE LUCILLE CARLETON:

“Nothing could induce me to this step excepting the extreme circumstances in which I am placed. I am the widow of your late uncle, since whose death your father has entirely cut off the allowance which he used to draw from his bankers, and long previously I was given but a small portion of this. The funeral expenses were far beyond my means, and I am in utter poverty. I have spent my last sou in reaching London, where I find your parent will neither see nor hear me. I appeal

to your sympathies, as one woman to another in distress. Help me. Do give me some little of your plenty, at least to keep me from utter want.

“In anxious suspense,

“I am, *votre malheureux*,

“THERESA CARLETON.”

Lucille read this with feelings of distress and sorrow. Here was she, surrounded with every comfort and blessing, whilst this poor creature was in actual want. What was to be done? She could not speak to her father. It was the one subject utterly barred and prohibited. She had never forgotten the painful look of distress upon his face the last time this woman's name was mentioned.

“Who gave you this?” she asked.

Daniel, thoroughly posted, said, “A lady who says as how she came from Paris, and told me, if you gived me anythink, to be werry keerful and pertickler and bring it *straight* to her.”

“Do you know where she lives?”

“No; she didn't as seem to have any place to live. She would 'a come herself but said as how she was afraid. So she come to my boss first. Here's his card. The lady come to him, and he sort o' took pity on her, and sent me with that letter as she wrote.”

“Can I see your master?” said she.

“Oh, yes'm! he's my uncle too,” with a broad grin. “Oh, yes; he'll come to see, or meet you anywhere you say.”

"I will keep this card," said she, "and send a message when and where I can meet him. In the mean time, take this and give it to the lady, if she is there when you get back; if not, to him, for her." Here she handed him several sovereigns—all she had at the time.

She felt that she must devise means, some way to help her permanently, and yet not wound her father's feelings. She stood pondering a moment after the boy had gone, and then went in search of Mrs. Simpson, determined to hold council and seek advice in the matter.

As soon as Daniel had got outside, he gave a low peculiar whistle, as if some act was absolutely necessary to give vent to his pent up feelings. "Aint she a green 'un?" he thought, as he went homeward, but Mr. Squint's house was not much out of the road.

If this low and slouchy boy had a real feeling at all, it was for his sister, little Fan, and, next to this, a lurking admiration for the fair Rosa at Stalker's. As he came in sight of the lawyer's domicile, he espied the little maid, broom in hand, busily sweeping the pavement.

"Hullo, sis."

"Why, Dan, how you frightened me," cried she, aloud, letting drop the broom as she turned and recognized him.

"You mustn't get skeered so easy. People aint a goin' to kill you."

"Well, I don't know," replied the little maid, as

though this were a doubtful fact, panting and holding her hand to her side in process of recovery.

"Look e' here, what I've got," said the boy, suddenly thrusting his hand before her, filled with the gold pieces.

"Oh, Dan! but my, you do take my breath away."

"Aint they pretty?"

"Yes; but where did you get them?"

"Oh, I knows a thing or two: Here's one for you."

"No, I don't want any," replied the little maid, resuming her sweeping, industriously. She had cause to suspect the honesty of her brother's intentions before.

"Why, what's the matter, sis?"

"Nothing, only I don't want any. You'd better take them to those as whom they belong to."

"Then I'd take 'em to where they come frum."

"Then you'd better do it."

"I aint quite so green as that, sis; but as you don't want 'em, I'll take a couple myself," and he separated these, dropping them into a side pocket. "I'll tell you what we'll do, sis, we'll go to the Wax Works and the Zoö'."

"Oh! Dan, wouldn't that be nice, if I could get off; not, you mean, with—that money," nodding her head at it.

"Why, in be sure."

"I—don't—think I'll go, Dan." It was said reluctantly, but resolutely. The broom plied again.

"We'll talk about it sometime, sis. I say, has my guv'ner been here lately?"

"No, not since that night."

"They are up to a power o'mischief, them two is, but look e' here, yer never seen our shop, have yer?"

"No," a pause in the occupation.

"Well, I tell you what, if the Missus will let you off some evenin', I'll come round and fetch yer; got lots o' things there I want to show yer, but don't mention it here."

"I should like to come very much, that is if it aint wrong and I can get off."

"Wrong, yer don't suppose I'd let yer do anything wrong. I aint ther sort, but I thinks yer might have a little fun. Now mind, when I makes a fortin' I'm a goin' to set you up real ladylike."

"Oh, Dan, I believe you would, but you know people sometimes don't see things in the same light; but I shall be ever so glad, and I wont mention it, because I don't see what harm it could be."

"Well, I'll let yer know. Sometimes the boss goes away for a whole day and then I'll come for you."

At this moment a shrill voice from the interior called little Fan to further exertions, and so the two parted, Daniel proceeding straightway to deliver the money to the pawnbroker, minus his own retainer.

"It will do very well, very well," said the miser, as he chinked the coin together. "When did she say she would send her message?"

"She didn't say *when*, but that she'd surely send."

"Very well, very well, and I'll have my revenge yet—my revenge." This was muttered fiercely. "Ah, ah! my turn will come, and for every stroke I received I'll pay back tenfold. I'll—but never mind, my time will come." He retired to his den, up-stairs, muttering, as he went, "I'll have them yet, the whole of them, and I'll scorch his heart through her."

Whilst this scene was being enacted in that low haunt, Lucille was in close conference with the faithful housekeeper.

Mrs. Simpson well remembered "the young master" when she was a girl at Carleton Park, the news of his marriage coming home, and how distressed and displeased Sir John was. Reflecting thus, she was very much opposed to her young mistress taking any personal steps in the matter other than to send relief from time to time.

"Well, what do you propose to do, child?" she said, having exhausted all arguments.

"I want to do something that will relieve her permanently."

"That will take a great deal of money, and they do say these French women are decidedly extravagant," said the housekeeper.

"Now, papa would give me any reasonable sum I might ask for, but for so large an amount he would naturally want to know what I am going to do with it. I was thinking that five hundred pounds would do for

a pretty long time; and you must remember, whatever her conduct has been, that she was the wife of my father's own brother."

"Well, my dear, I have in the bank even a larger sum than that. You can take it, to be sure."

"You good old soul," cried Lucille, affectionately. "You must not think I could have the heart to take your little savings."

"Well, my child, I have been in the family a long while and have put it aside from time to time; it's never been of any use to me, for I have much more as it is than I want. My child, take it in welcome. When I come to think of it, I've been an old fool to put it by, for I have no one I care to leave it to."

"It's ever so kind of you, but dear Mrs. Simpson, I could not touch it. But, come, you who have been always so good and kind, you must help me now, for my heart is bent on this."

"Help you, dear child! I would help you with my life's blood. But *how* am I to help you, if you won't let me? You won't take my money, which, Heaven knows, I shall never have use for."

"You have promised to help me," said Lucille, brightening up, though affected by the other's behavior. "I'll tell you what I'll do. You know the diamonds papa bought me last year. I will take them and obtain the money on them."

"And not take *mine*?"

"Indeed, I cannot. But here is the card of a man from whom I can obtain it."

"Why," said the housekeeper, taking the card and wiping her spectacles, "why, child, this is a pawnbroker, and a Jew at that. 'Moses Mosler.' Depend upon it, no good comes of this. But tell me what you wish."

"Well, then, I will tell you what I wish done. Do you know of any place I might go with you and meet this man?"

"There's Mary Ann Glover's, my niece. She keeps a very respectable lodging-house. We might get the loan of her 'parlor.'"

"That's just the thing. We'll go there—not to-morrow night, for we are going to the opera. The night after will do, and we will send the message in the morning. I do not wish to see—this woman. Papa might not like that. *You* can see her and find out what her wants are; but the what do you call him?"—glancing at the advertising card—"the pawnbroker we can meet together."

"Hadn't you better put it off a little longer?" said the housekeeper, hoping to gain time.

"No; you promised to do what I asked," said the other, "so you can't refuse. And I wan't to do everything myself."

"Well, I will do as you say. But suppose people hear of it?"

"What do I care what people say?" cried the independent spirit of Lucille. "I feel that I am doing right. So, to-morrow, call upon your niece and make the arrangements."

"It's a long walk."

"Well, get a cab and ride," broke in Lucille. "I've never been in a cab, and it will be great fun."

"My child, I shouldn't like any one to see you riding in a cab; but there, there, I will make no more objections."

"That's a real good soul, just as you are;" and with this sweet approval from her well-loved young mistress, the old housekeeper went off to do everything in her power to further the object and please her pet.

CHAPTER XVI.

TRICKED.

NEXT day, the pawnbroker received a message stating where and when Miss Carleton would see him. Chuckling inwardly at the seemingly smooth sailing of his schemes, he made further preparation as a part of his plans, by going that night to "Stalker's Varieties." This was one of that class of places not only indigenous to London, but numerous in all large cities—a low, wide front, with great gilt letters its entire breadth. These were brilliantly illuminated at night, proclaiming to the amusement-seeking public that this was "Stalker's London Varieties." Upon the inside, in perfect keeping with the outer appearance, was a long, wide, low-ceiled apartment, at the further end of which a raised platform or stage extended its whole width. In front of this—in fact occupying nearly the entire floor—were a number of small tables, at which were seated the audience, who signalled their approval of the third-rate actors and actresses who might claim their attention by loud whistling, stamping, or bringing the bottoms of their mugs and glasses with thundering claps upon the table.

In conjunction with one or two other lads, it was Daniel's place to fix upon and remove from the stage

such pieces of furniture and stage scenery as should be required through the various performances, in addition to which he had to assist in serving the drinks. In this last capacity, Daniel would often stop in open-mouthed, silent admiration, at some wonderful trick of a very poor juggler, an intricate step in the clog dance, or an especially funny song, until reminded of his proper sphere by the sonorous cry from his customers.

It was here that Rosa Spiggott, the innkeeper of Wentworth's erring daughter, had, after the short vicissitudes of Paris and London life, wound up. Though the lines of nightly dissipation were plainly marked, still she was very pretty. Her face had not yet lost the freshness of youth, and Stalker, the proprietor, considered her his best card and chief attraction. The girl was smart, apt at imitation, and her talents for the impersonation of characters almost surprising.

"Rosa, the old man wants to see you to-night, and says he'll meet you outside after a bit." This was said by Daniel, in one of those moments when a requisite change brought them in close proximity.

"What for? I don't owe him anything."

"He wants to see you pertickler. I kind o' thinks there some'at in it, cos he's been actin' werry curious these last few days, a sendin' me of a precious lot o' errands."

"You tell him to come back here at the end of the last piece and I'll see him. The mean old miser! I don't expect he wants to pay the door money; but he'll have

to do that, because Mr. Slimthing is going to take me to supper, after the performance is over, and I don't want to be seen talking to such a miserable old wretch. So just tell him if he wants to see me he'll have to come in here."

Half an hour after this, as the actress was changing her soiled satin stage slippers for ordinary walking shoes, the Jew glided behind the scenes.

"Why, Rosa, how handsome you look. I'm so glad to see you."

"I believe you," she replied; "you are always glad to see me when I can be of any use, and I know you are after something now; but I can tell you one thing, Mister, I don't want any more like that we had last time. I've had enough of that."

She was arranging her bonnet before a cracked mirror, preparatory to leaving.

"Oh! Rosa, how can you talk so, and you got it all, everything?"

"Everything! I got five pounds, and I expect you got fifty. No, I tell you once for all, I've had enough of blackmailing business. If I'd have known you were going so far, I never would have done it. However, no use crying over spilt milk, but if it's anything like that you might as well keep it to yourself, for I'll have nothing to do with it."

"Hush! don't talk so loud," whispered the Jew, in the greatest consternation; "don't talk so loud," he whispered excitedly, looking to see if they were undis-

covered. "Indeed, indeed, I got but one pound; that's all that was left after yours."

She turned full upon him with unblushing eye. "You are lying now," she said; "it's no use to try it on with me. I haven't been living these last three years for nothing, and you've got Dick in a nice place, haven't you? I know your wicked heart, and if you don't get Slummer's Dick out pretty soon, why—you know me, and you know I'll do what I say. I don't suppose you were aware he was a friend of mine?"

"Oh, Rosa, oh, Rosa, and he near murdered me; but I didn't know he was a friend of yours. I did not, indeed."

"Well, you see to his getting out," said the impetuous girl, perhaps not so very much displeased, as Dan'l had suggested that Richard was out of the way just at present. It *did* suit her purposes better, and therefore she used no further urging, but continued, "go on now, what is it you want?"

"Is there no one about?" said he, examining the walls and doors, "no one that might hear us? Hadn't we better go out on the street?"

"There's no one to hear, everybody's gone; don't you see the lights are out? So make haste, there's a gentleman waiting for me."

The Jew then detailed his wants. She was to appear, on the following evening, at Mrs. Glover's lodging-house in the character of a French lady, who was in great poverty, and to be attired accordingly. As

she had obtained a fair knowledge of the language during her sojourn at Paris, it seemed to suit very well.

"And, Rosa, here's a pound to begin with. You see I'm in earnest, and—and here's two, Rosa."

Rosa took the money with as much alacrity as the Jew was loth in parting with it, promising to assist him, and he knew she would keep her faith.

"But, Rosa, one word more—just a moment," and he stroked his beard complacently, questioning the effect of what he was about to communicate; but money, money would do it. "Mr. Squint and I have a little plan——"

"Mr. Squint," she said contemptuously, "and so you've taken him into your counsels, what a precious pair you are, to be sure. I would'nt give that for him," with a snap of her fingers. "Oh! I know him, you and he would just about do to go together; but what's this new scheme you two have patched together? I'll be bound there's no good in it to any but yourselves."

"Well, Rosa, we want a baby—a little baby—a nice little baby boy."

The girl was silent from astonishment. Could she have heard correctly?

"A baby!"

"Yes, Rosa, a nice little baby boy."

The girl discontinuing her toilet sat down to recover her surprise.

"What do you mean? You are crazy. I've got no baby."

"But you can get us one; how many poor mothers are starving and would be glad to obtain a home for their youngest born. Oh! it can be managed, it can be managed, and you can have the care of the child if you desire, or doubt us."

"I don't like the looks of this," she said. "What do you intend to do?"

"There's a hundred pounds in it, Rosa; ay, a thousand, if we succeed. We are going to make an heir of him—the possessor of untold wealth, and will make him happy as a king—and get our little commission into the bargain."

"I haven't time to talk about this now," said she, hastily arising. "It's a nice sum of money, but there's risk in it. You must go now; I can't keep the gentleman waiting any longer."

Thus dismissing him, she went out to join the Hon. Mr. Slimthing, at the supper that she was invited to.

On the next night, the Jew, punctual to appointment, was duly established in Mrs. Glover's parlor, with Rosa, in excellent disguise. Mrs. Simpson, the housekeeper, was the first, according to her own arrangements, to enter the room, constituting herself a sort of advance guard, to reconnoitre the position, before allowing her young mistress to enter the field. Miss Carleton was in an adjoining room. This preliminary inspection was gotten through quite satisfactorily

by the old lady. Her questions, put to the pretended foreign lady, were answered in broken French, in a pathetic tone; and at last, when in the shadowy light, the veil was partly raised, displaying a still fair but pallid face with deep marks of care upon it, then indeed were the sympathies of Mrs. Simpson enlisted; and when told it would be against the wish of the Baronet for Miss Carleton to meet her, it was with the deepest distress that Madame received it; but natural that she should not further urge her desire for a personal interview.

With very complacent thoughts the housekeeper guided the pawnbroker to where Lucille was.

"Good-evening, my lady, good-evening," said Moses Mosler, in his gentlest tone, as he made a low obeisance. "Ah! it is easy to tell that the young lady is from the country. There is no bloom like unto the bloom of health, from the fresh, pure air. We, poor townspeople, are obliged to breathe an atmosphere so thick with fogs that one can scarcely see through." Here he ended with a suppressed fit of coughing.

Then Mrs. Simpson made a low-voiced report of Madame Carleton's deplorable condition. Meantime, the Jew stood humbly waiting until Lucille addressed him.

"I believe you carry on the business of lending money upon jewelry?"

"Yes, my lady. It is a very poor business. Were it not for kind friends who help me, I could not live by

it; but if I can do any little thing to oblige so beautiful a lady, I will try my utmost."

This compliment was most distasteful to the recipient, so she cut him short by producing the case of jewels. The old man's covetous eyes sparkled as he held out his shaking hands to receive them.

"How much might my lady wish to obtain upon them?"

"Five hundred pounds."

"Five hundred pounds! It is too much—too much!"

"They cost a thousand, I believe."

"Let me see," answered the old man, examining them attentively, and carefully weighing each between his fingers, thrusting them in the direction of the light, then shaking his head slowly. "It is too much, my lady. Five hundred pounds is a very large sum, and if anything should happen to the lady, my money would be lost; and I know she would not wish that to a poor man like me."

"What will you propose to do?" said Lucille, rather irritated at his seeming irresolution.

"Let me see, my lady. Let me think," and he paused a moment in reflection. "I have not so much money myself, but I have a brother—a good and generous brother." Then looking up, as if determinedly, "you shall have it, my lady. I know my brother will help me out; he has money; he is very rich, and I will see him this very night."

“You will take the jewels, and give me the money. I trust that I shall soon be able to return it,” said Lucille, “and then I shall be entitled to receive them back, in precisely the condition they are now.”

“Oh! yes, my lady. *When* you pay me, I shall deliver them to you, just as they are now. I have an excellent place to keep them securely;” then in a lower and more confidential tone, “is not the money for yon woman—for Madame Carleton?”

“That is what I intend it for.”

“Then, my lady,” said he, closing the box and holding tightly to it, “I will just pay it over to her, and save you further trouble in the matter; that is, if you are satisfied.”

Lucille looked at Mrs. Simpson. “That is what *she* says—that you can entrust anything for her to this man,” corroborated the housekeeper.

“Then,” said Lucille, “give the money to her. I suppose I am to retain your card?”

“Oh, yes, lady; that secures the return of the jewels. And now, since our little business is settled, all that remains for me is respectfully to take my leave.”

With a cringing bow and backward movement, he made his exit.

After the pawnbroker and his accomplice had gotten well out of the way, Lucille and her *chaperon* were driven home again.

In her own *boudoir*, Lucille—who, the reader will perceive, knew nothing of the pecuniary realities of

life, else she would not so easily have parted with the valuable jewels—questioned Mrs. Simpson about the widow, and ascertained that she looked faded and sorrow-stricken and that she spoke English imperfectly. But the old lady had an uneasy feeling that this was not to be the end.

CHAPTER XVII.

MADAME CARLETON.

THE real Madame Carleton reclined in her rather contracted apartments in Paris. She had passed through many vicissitudes of fortune. Her record as maid, wife and widow was not especially *sans peur* or *sans reproche*. By mere accident, she had been with her husband in his last and brief illness, which was induced by dissipation, and a not costly funeral, provided from her almost empty purse, was all that she could afford.

Madame's one ruling passion was ambition. She had never succeeded beyond a certain half-way point, but would have made any sacrifice to obtain fame in the ballet as a danseuse. She had been pretty, and was mistress of all the secrets by which professional ladies contrive to preserve the semblance of youth, beauty and fine figure long after they have departed. Madame had always led her present life, except for a few years after marriage; but the fascination was too great, and she had returned with more zeal than ever.

Her apartments were high up, airy and bright, but this is all that might be said in their favor. As she reclined, there was a knock at the door. Her servant informed her that a gentleman desired to speak with

her, and that he had been looking everywhere for Madame.

It had been some time since gentlemen had looked for her. There was a faint possible hope it might be one of her old admirers returned.

"A gentleman to see me? What does he look like?"

"Perhaps Madame will let me answer that question in person. Excuse me, but I am most anxious to see you, my business is most pressing." And he handed her a soiled card, upon which appeared the name of "Mr. Theophilus Squint, Attorney-at-law."

Madame looked at him inquiringly, and saw a little, dried-up, shabby man.

"Perhaps you are mistaken in the person you seek," said the lady.

"No," he said, as in answer to that look. "I have the honor of addressing Madame Carleton?—I mean the distinguished lady, who, as Mademoiselle Frangapani, is well known as *the premiere danseuse* of Europe."

This compliment was so effective that, in a short time, the two were conversing most confidentially, and, with infinite subtlety, the London pettifogger was able, without dread of alarming her, to suggest Madame's participation in his schemes.

In their long conversation, he told her that Sir John Carleton, who was very stern and inflexible, far from increasing the annual pension which he had given her

as his only brother's widow, had determined to withdraw, or, at least, diminish it, but she had good friends, who were willing to protect her from such machinations. "But," he added, in a consoling and protective manner, "there is a sure way of circumventing him."

Her cupidity and attention being thus excited, he suggested that she had the power of commanding a large income *through her son*.

The poor woman was bewildered. "But I have no son," she exclaimed.

"No son, Madame? Think for a moment." And he paused, as if to allow meditation.

The lady pondered. Could she have a son? Could women unconsciously have children?

The lawyer interrupted her thoughts with, "Madame, if you have not a son just at present, you *will* have a son in due season. Everything depends upon this."

Perhaps he was making an offer of marriage? He *might* be eccentric in this particular. She had not the slightest objection to matrimony, however suddenly proposed; but Mr. Squint divined the current of her reflections.

"I will explain," he said. "Sir John Carleton is a millionaire. His estates are strictly entailed upon the male issue, in the event of there being such. At present, they will descend in an entirely different line, and these very estates ought to be yours, Madame, through your son. To this fact I pledge myself, and I *never*

deceive my clients. Yes," he continued, "this large estate will be snatched from you, *the lawful owner*—will be taken by main force. Therefore, I have come, unsolicited, to you—solely having your interest in view—to estop this terrible wrong. It remains for you, Madame, to say if this iniquitous thing shall be done?"

"Is this really true?" exclaimed the confused woman. "If so, what can I do to prevent it?"

"Do? It is very plain what you *ought* to do," said the lawyer, with a sneering smile as if there was no doubt about it. "Listen! Sir John is in delicate health. He may die at any moment, and if he lingers we will still have our forces in reserve to be brought forth at the right moment; you are but a widow of a few months. Go into seclusion for a short time. *We* will provide a child, a male child, if we have to beg, borrow or steal one. A physician will be in attendance. Everything necessary shall be provided, and then at the proper time produce the young heir. Do you understand me, Madame? Do you take my meaning in?" and Mr. Squint drew forth a pewter snuff box, helping himself liberally to the contents, whilst allowing the lady time to take in his suggestion.

Even her contracted intellect understood that after due signs and certain retirement she was to reappear as the mother of an infant boy, the posthumous child of her late husband. Madame had done many wrongs, even some wicked things, but never aught like this, and her withered cheek turned a shade paler.

"They will find me out," said she simply taking in the first, and to her, greatest difficulty in the way.

Mr. Squint was glad of the hesitation, he knew it meant capitulation.

"Find you out? Leave that to me, and if they do, the law has no punishment, take my opinion on that, Madame."

"I don't exactly see how I'm to do it."

"You must go to an isolated place," said he, "and since you seem to have some hesitation, I will send the child and the physician, a French one if possible. Both are easily obtained, and when I send for you, you will come to London. If we can but obtain a hold, however inconsiderable, upon this man, or the estate, it will be a fortune in itself."

Madame reluctantly consented, and signed a paper, a mere matter of form, it really made little difference, but still transferring the management of the prospective estate so far as *she* might be interested, together with the guardianship of the heir, also in prospective, to the care and tender mercies of Mr. Squint. After this Mr. Squint took his leave.

There was money in his pocket. Good crisp notes of the Bank of England, as readily exchanged in Paris as at the Bank itself. These had been provided by Moses Mosler, and for which a costly pledge had been furnished at the hands of the enemy and was safe in possession. The pawnbroker's presage that the campaign should thus be carried on was surely true.

Squint walked down the avenue cogitating, calculating. Dates must be made to tally with the utmost exactness. Circumstances must agree with nice precision. So fully was he engrossed in these lubrications that he took little care to avoid the passing crowd, when he was roughly jostled from behind by a porter's load, and rudely pushed against a dapper little man who happened to be just in front. Mr. Squint's hat fell to the ground and whilst he was engaged in recovering it the dapper little gentleman was apologizing verbosely for what he had not done.

Recovering his equilibrium, the lawyer, in no amiable mood, looked to discover the cause of his mishap, and beheld the diminutive individual jabbering French at him, not one syllable of which he understood.

"Do you say you did it?" blurted out the attorney.

"Oh! no, no," cried the other, this time in good English, "but I was afraid you might think it was. The man who caused it has turned the corner, I am very sorry."

This considerably mollified the lawyer, who took in the situation of affairs. Close by was a café—a reminder of nature's cravings in the way of hunger and thirst. His eye fell upon the stranger again. His soul was full of generosity. Did not this man speak English? He might not have such a second opportunity, who could help him better how to order a dinner, or who might know the national beverages to greater advantage, and so Mr. Squint's gaze fell upon him again with much favor.

“Wait — wait — you’ll take something to drink?” he asked.

The stranger was willing, and after several drinks, the attorney became rather confidential. “Since I have been so fortunate,” said he, “to meet so congenial a gentleman, and one who speaks my own language, may I ask you to dine with me?”

This was accepted also, and before the end of the evening the lawyer had ascertained that his new made acquaintance was a physician — without practice — consequently without money, and poor, very poor. These unfortunate circumstances combined, sadly affected his sympathies and warped his prejudices, and before Mr. Squint had taken leave of Paris, the Frenchman was engaged as a valuable instrument in the conspiracy.

CHAPTER XVIII.

LITTLE FAN'S ADVENTURE.

THE miser had gone on one of his periodical visits for the day, and had left Daniel in full possession of the office, with many strict injunctions, the last, but not least, of which was, not to leave the place.

Before he could have got half way upon his journey, Daniel was speeding fast towards Mr. Squint's house, and, arriving there, put his fingers to his mouth and gave his favorite shrill whistle. This was an understood signal to little Fan, who made her appearance, after some delay below in the area.

"I say, sis, kin you git off to-day?"

On inquiry, her mistress gave her the required permission, and the girl speedily reappeared, in her bonnet and warm shawl, prepared to join him at the moment.

Daniel first took her to his master's place, where he opened each drawer, emptied every box, and showed her all the mysteries of a pawn establishment. Little Fan was delighted. While the lad was upon his knees, holding up a box from a tobacco-scented receptacle, the door quietly opened, and the form of Slummer's Dick darkened the threshold, as he stood irresolutely there.

Abruptly he inquired where "the old 'un" was, and, showing by his appearance and manner that he had

lately been "down on his luck," as he said. He had been released from prison, on payment of a fine, small in amount, but with difficulty raised for him by a few friends, nearly as badly off as himself, and paid his first visit, with no friendly feeling, to the domicile of the author of his wrongs. He was in very bad spirits, owing to the refusal of Slummer, his former employer, again to give him any, even the lowest, employment.

He received, with suspicion and gloom, the intelligence that the miser had left for the day, that he often went down the country by the railroad, and that he would be even, when he could find or make a chance, with "the old 'un," who had used him so vilely, and had pretended that his declining to prosecute had enabled his victim to escape without being tried, at the Old Bailey, for aggravated assault and highway robbery.

"I say, Dick, is it *very* bad there?" said Daniel, jerking his thumb over his shoulder in the direction where the prison was.

"It's a werry bad place some ways, but then it learns a fellow a heap o' things he didn't know before. I can't say as I altogether regrets my stay, though there's some things as isn't pleasant. If a man's 'onest when he goes in, it'll soon be took out of him, and, if he's a rascal, he'll get no better. But it's no use to keep chaffing here. Can you lend a chap five bob?"

Daniel was not one of the lending order of human beings, and coolly inquired on what description of property, personal or real, the five shillings were to be

advanced, peremptorily declining to do business without some such security.

Little Fan had been silently listening all the while, and her tender spirit was stricken by the woe-begone appearance of poor Dick. So, in the fullness of her heart, she pulled out her shabby little purse, and, before Daniel was aware of her intention, had counted out five shillings—almost the half of a year's savings—and held them out to Richard without a word.

Daniel saw this act, rapid though it was, and made a grab for the money, but Richard, too quick for him, caught and held the coin tight in his clutch.

"What did you do that for?" he said, angrily turning upon his sister. "Look here, Dick, give 'em back to her. She's my sister. 'Tis all she's got, and I won't see her imposed on."

"Indeed I have more," she said, exposing what remained, "and I can do without them very well. Indeed I can."

"Surely *you* won't be such a jail bird as to keep them?" replied Daniel.

"The little lady—for a lady she is, though your sister—the little lady gave 'em to me, and I'll keep 'em. And now I'll cut my lucky, wishing all the world's luck to you, Miss. But I am afeard it's all up with me."

After this, Daniel and Fan actually closed the miser's den and started for the Zoölogical Gardens, where they passed the afternoon with the wild animals,

and lamented that they could spare such a short time for that purpose. The dread that "the old 'un" might return earlier than was expected also hastened them.

"Stop a minute," Daniel said, "and I'll put you into a 'bus that will take you right on the corner of your street." So saying, he took her back to the pawn-office for a moment.

The lad groped about for a match, when, suddenly, a familiar step and voice were heard, and, glancing through the window, he saw the Jew, in company with Mr. Squint. Apparently, they had only just met, from opposite directions.

In great affright, for he dreaded his master's passion, when excited, Daniel forced his little sister up the rickety stairs into a little niche under them, which was called his bedroom, and contained a straw-stuffed mattress, with scanty linen and a very light blanket and coverlet. Here she would be safe so long as she kept quiet.

Daniel had "saved his distance," for, just then, the Jew came in, asked for a light, and bade him begone as soon as he pleased. He slunk back to his nest, where Fan's excitement was so great that he had much trouble in keeping her quiet. After a time, the youth snatched a little repose, but the girl listened and took in all that the Jew and Squint were saying. It was worth listening to.

Squint had just returned from Paris, and this was his

first meeting with the Jew after that. The lawyer boasted that he had done all that was necessary as to the production of the infant boy, who was to be passed off as the posthumous son of Sir John Carleton's widow, and, therefore, heir-at-law to the Baronet's large entailed estates. Squint told how he had found a French physician, able and willing to assist in the fraud; and the Jew bragged of his own cleverness in having already provided an infant of the right sex, which Rosa would convey to France at the proper time.

The two conspirators had nearly quarrelled over a demand by Squint, of a further sum of fifty pounds, towards current expenses of the job. The attorney spoke of the risk to himself—"a professional man of high standing" was his self-designation—and said: "If you want to conspire against the estate of Sir John Carleton and bring ruin upon the young lady, Miss Carleton, I mean"—

"Ah!" cried the Jew, breathing hard, and holding his long, bony hands out, like a vulture's claws, "don't speak *her* name—don't call her 'young lady'—don't—don't—I hate them all!" And his frame shook in a paroxysm of uncontrollable rage. "I'll do anything," he continued, "anything you say, to crush the whole brood out. I'd *kill* her, to rack *his* heart!" and he paced the floor like a caged beast.

Gradually his rabid rage abated. Squint received his fifty pounds, and both left the house, on the latter's invitation to take refreshments at Slummer's.

When they had retired, Dick liberated his sister, who was sharp, if small, and, half lifting her, half carrying her, down the steps, guided her out of the den, saying, "Mind, you keep right straight down the next square, then go on a bit to your left, and take a 'bus, that will set you right down almost at your own door."

The result of these rather indefinite instructions was that poor little Fan, her mind confused by the villainy she had overheard, and troubled by a dread of her mistress's anger for her long delay, wandered very much out of her way. She must have been deficient in the organ of Locality, for she came, after much wandering, into a broad, fashionable and brilliantly-lighted street. She accosted various persons, with a moaning request to tell her the way to her home, and was variously rebuffed or ridiculed.

At last, a handsome carriage drove up, with its footmen swinging behind. An old gentleman and a young lady descended, and entered a brilliantly lighted establishment, within whose shadow the poor child was then standing. The liveried menials laughed at Fannie's tearful enquiries; but, at that moment, the bazaar door opened, and the gentleman and lady reappeared. The footman darted back to his place at the carriage door. The lady was about to get in, when, attracted by little Fannie's sobs, she asked:

"What is the matter with that child?"

The footman, touching his hat, replied :

“Lost her way, Miss, I believe.”

“Papa, won't you wait a moment?” said Lucille Carleton, for she it was, as turning to the sobbing child : “Are you lost, little girl?”

“Please, my lady, I only want to know where I live. If somebody would but tell me. Please, kind lady, wont *you* tell me?” and she held up her little hands entreatingly.

Lucille took her pityingly, and led her toward the carriage. “Papa, here is a little girl who is lost. Will you let me take her to her home?”

“It's getting late,” said her father, glancing at his watch; “we have scarcely time to get in for dinner now; but do as you please, my child.”

“Oh! yes, papa. Little girl, where do you live?”

“Kind lady, I don't know,” said the little maid, anxiously, looking up into the gentle face with the utmost confidence.

“Whom do you live with?” said Sir John, leaning forward, perceiving the difficulty.

“Please, sir, I work for Mrs. Squint, and I'm out so dreadful late, that I don't know what *will* become of me.”

“Who is Mr. Squint?”

“Oh, sir, he's a lawyer.”

“James,” said he, “step in there, ask for a directory, and find out.”

The footman presently returned with the address,

and gave it to the coachman. By this time, Fannie had been ensconced on the front seat, opposite her new friends.

After a half hour's drive she recognized the corner grocery and the apothecary's, and exclaimed:

"Here it is!"

Sir John pulled the cord, the carriage halted, and fortunate Fan was put down within a few doors of her own home. The driver wheeled, and was about to trot off, when she rushed back and, at imminent risk of being run over, clambered upon the steps again, thrusting her face into the window.

"Please, kind lady, beautiful lady, *will* you tell me your name?"

"Miss Carleton;" and the vehicle rolled off.

Little Fan looked after it for a moment undecided, then tried to follow a few steps, and stopping, walked slowly back, thinking: "Could this be the lady she heard Mr. Squint and the money-lender talking of? It surely was 'Miss Carleton.' She remembered the name distinctly; but"—and here Mrs. Squint answered her tremulous rap at the door, and, most fortunately, was in an unexpectedly good humor, which made her disdain even to grumble at her.

CHAPTER XIX.

THE RIDE.

SUMMER had come. Sir John Carleton is back at Carleton Park; Lord St. Maur at Maurland Towers. Bessie Egerton has accompanied Lucille on her return. In the meantime, Mrs. Cashbid is left disconsolate. Mr. Cashbid is likewise affected. The girl's bright, cheerful presence has become a necessity. He has relented from his first decision, affecting "the rest of the family," and, through the proper channels, a sufficient sum has reached Bessie's mother, to make them all comfortable; an amount which the twice-widowed woman considered wealth and superfluity.

Rufus Applegarth migrated between the city and Wentworth. Sir John's pressing invitation to him to stay at Carleton Park, was frequently accepted, when the two would seem to be lost deep in the mysteries of chemical science. Sometimes he was a guest of the Rev. Hugh Leslie, at the Rectory, sometimes at the Great George Inn, once at Maurland Towers—everywhere welcomed as the friend of the Baronet, and a man whose conversation, when he conversed at all, was of rare merit. Especially kind to the villagers, he attended their wants in his medical capacity, without remuneration. Some of the most hopeless cases which

surgery had long despaired of, yielded to his judgment and skill, until the mothers, whose children's deformed limbs he had brought to a more natural shape, spread his reputation far and wide, and offers for handsome London partnerships, and lucrative practices, flowed in upon him. These he cared not for, nor took notice of, following his own restless inclinations as they might lead; but there seemed to be ever a burden upon his mind, a distant, absent look, and even the villagers, who from kind offices had grown to love him, admitted that he was "kind o' right queer."

Sometimes, when engaged in the laboratory with the Baronet, who saw the depression of spirits and tried in every way to avoid the subject, he would pause in his occupation to question of the past, showing where his mind was still brooding. Then the other would answer readily, but quickly, and lead him back to other themes; but there was one question he continually asked himself, and which could not be answered: "Was his father living?"

Lucille and Bessie managed to pass the time delightfully. Left principally to themselves and their own resources, they would take long drives and rides; sometimes, though rarely, Sir John accompanied them; generally a groom rode in the rear, and in this independent fashion, they traversed the country for miles.

It was one of those days when Rufus Applegarth and Sir John had shut themselves up in the extensive laboratory for the purpose of experimenting, that Lucille and Bessie gladly ran to order the horses.

"Let's take a long ride," cried the former, in high spirits, "away over past Edgecumb and up the Penine hills. There is a beautiful view to be seen from the top, though the road is bad."

It was one of her most charming characteristics, that Lucille, bashful and timid in her behavior before strangers, never restrained her mirth at home; and it was at these moments, when the full flow of animal spirits chased the warm blood over her cheeks and sent the brightness into her dark eyes, that she was most beautiful and fascinating.

Her father took great pride in his stables, so that the horses were soon prepared, and the young ladies, with the mounted groom in the rear, set out in high spirits. They rode well, and when a good stretch of road permitted, let their steeds have loosened rein, much to the disgust of the groom, who had no fancy for break-neck speed, and frequently had to use whip or spur to keep up with the fair equestrians, whilst they, heartily enjoying their ride, forgot his very existence. On they went through Wentworth, past the Great George Inn, and, at Lonedrear House paused to breathe their horses, and take a look at it.

"There's a very queer story about it," said Lucille, in answer to a question from Bessie. "I never exactly understood, because I could get no one to properly explain it. Mrs. Simpson knows all about it, but whenever she has been at the point of telling me, something has always occurred to interrupt us. Papa knew

the gentleman who lived there, quite well, I believe, and I think Dr. Applegarth must be some connection of his, for I sometimes hear him speak of it."

"I know his people first came from England," rejoined Bessie, "for as soon as we got to London he came right down to Wentworth. You could hardly conceive how kind he was to me, coming over, and he was the only real friend we had in America—thoughtful and unselfish—but he has changed very much recently. I don't know what it is, but his mind appears uneasy and dejected." This last was uttered absently, almost mournfully.

"Yes," replied Lucille, "he is kind and gentle to every one. The people around here seem almost to worship him. I like him very much, though I can't just make out why it is that at times he is so silent and depressed."

They passed on until a curve of the road brought them in view of long, sloping meadows, and the gently rising hills beyond, where, against the dark back-ground of forest, Maurland Tower grandly loomed up, its turrets rising abruptly from the plane of parapets and roofs, making a romantic and magnificent sight.

"There are the Towers!" exclaimed Bessie, as they slackened their pace to a walk. "We can get a much better view from here than from Carleton Park. How grand it looks! What a lovely place it must be! Just see the gardens, even at this distance, how beautiful they are, and I like Lord St. Maur so much. He was

in our box at the opera the first night I saw you, and was talking to you afterward. I remember now, he was taken to Carleton Park when thrown from his horse; Captain Trevellyan told me all about it."

"I barely saw him whilst he was there," replied Lucille, remembering the cold, colorless face, with its every feature as though cut in marble, and also recollecting, with some embarrassment, the means of her first assistance. "He appears wholly engrossed in Parliamentary affairs, though never forgetting his people here. All this is Maurlands, extending for miles, as far as the eye can reach, I believe. Did you meet him often?" This was asked indifferently, but there was an underlying interest in her voice that would not have deceived wiser ears.

"No," returned Bessie; "I saw very little of him, and then with Captain Trevellyan. He does not seem to feel his high position at all, though why his head's not turned by what every one says of him, I can't conceive. Do you know his friend, Captain Trevellyan?"

"I have seen him once, I believe," answered Lucille. "They have great affection for each other, I've understood."

"Yes, and are very much together," replied Bessie. "Then Captain Trevellyan is so different from the young men one expects to find. To be sure, I have met but few since here, but he appears different from all, except Lord St. Maur. He took me to the ball at the Duchess of Farnborough's, who is Lord St. Maur's

aunt. One of his sisters went with us, and we had such a delightful time; and then he was constantly making up little parties, and suppers, and was ever so kind in a thousand ways, and his sisters are such nice girls, they insisted upon taking me everywhere."

Bessie always spoke very enthusiastically of Trevellyan; she liked him for his plain, friendly, honest manner.

"I like Captain Trevellyan's face very much," said Lucille, "but they are very different looking men."

"Yes," replied the other, laughing; "in appearance they can scarcely bear comparison. Captain Trevellyan puts one in mind of a great, strong, very faithful champion, who is ready and willing at all times to risk his life for a friend, never taking into consideration the causes, or consequences—acting only from an instinct of *right*—while Lord St. Maur is the essence of refined aristocracy. His handsome, clear-cut features, his whole bearing, his every word bespeaks so plainly the noble blood that fills his veins. Lord St. Maur, perhaps, from superior intelligence, acts calmly, and from well-drawn conclusions derived from deep study of books and nature, especially strange in one of his years; whilst Captain Trevellyan's conceptions and conclusions come simultaneously, and, therefore, it might be said he acts from impulse; but however arrived at, the end of their convictions, in most instances, would be the same. And in any emergency, I venture to say—never mind how wide apart they might be separated—both would act alike under the same circumstances.

"There is one thing," continued Bessie, "lacking which Lord St. Maur's life is incomplete, and that is, some one to care for, something to love, for he seems never to have found an object sufficient for this as yet."

"There is Captain Trevellyan," ventured Lucille, "I thought he was very fond of him."

"Oh, yes," returned the other, "but that is in an entirely different sense. Men cannot feel that gentle affection, or deep love for each other, that is called forth by a woman. From what I have seen, Lord St. Maur, however he may dissemble it under a cold and indifferent guise, is a man of deep and powerful emotions. In the women around him he cannot find that which his heart—it may be unknown to his own consciousness—longs and pines for."

"Well," cried Lucille, laughing lightly, "his ears must be tingling, though I expect he'd hold our opinions light either one way or the other. We've had a long talk about men in general, and Lord St. Maur in particular," and glancing back, "just see how far we've come; why, you can scarcely see the Towers, and look! what a level stretch in front, so let's have a canter." And away they flew, on through the road, with pretty green hedges upon either side, here and there a cottage or field gate breaking the even lines. On they went as though the beasts could never tire; on faster and faster until the horses were racing at their topmost speed.

At last sheer exhaustion caused steeds and riders to halt. The reins were thrown loosely on the animals'

necks, which, with heads hung down, stood panting, thoroughly blown, whilst the fair equestrians, loosening their hats, smoothed their ruffled tresses and seated themselves afresh in the saddles.

"Wasn't that a splendid run?" said Lucille, patting her favorite's neck; "we must have made a good three miles that stretch."

Nothing could have formed a fairer picture than the two girls mounted on the keen-limbed, blooded steeds, the breezes playing through their disheveled tresses, and with a brilliant color in their cheeks from the unusual exercise.

"But where's our groom?" exclaimed Bessie.

"I don't suppose he could keep up," rejoined the other, also missing him; "he'll have a chance of catching up now, while our horses are resting. I shouldn't be surprised if he'd stopped at that last tavern we passed; they all have a habit of doing so when opportunity allows, and here comes some one, too; I do wish he'd come," she said, nervously and impatiently. A horseman was approaching.

"I hope it's no one that we know," continued Lucille, "it's so awkward to be seen here by ourselves." She was vexed, or perhaps, if anything, felt awkward, as she expressed it. The color was increasing in her face, forming, with its contrast against the dark wealth of chestnut hair, a glorious beauty.

"I do believe it's Lord St. Maur," asserted Bessie, shading her eyes. "I don't mind him a bit."

She was right; it was Lord St. Maur, who had been inspecting the farther portions of his estate, and was returning this way, looking very handsome as he approached, raising his hat, his figure showing to advantage in the well-fitting riding suit. Bessie advanced a little to meet him.

"Good morning, Miss Egerton," he said, easily, and with great friendliness, whilst bowing his head a little lower and speaking more distantly to the other. "Are you lost so far away from home?"

Bessie answered "no. We started for a long ride—to the Penine hills—to see a noted view, and outran our groom. I suppose our pace was too fast for him."

St. Maur rode to an adjacent bend in the road, which commanded a longer view, and the missing groom did not appear, probably having gone on the road to the left—over a mile distant—not having been told how far the ladies intended to ride. St. Maur rejoiced, as it ensured his own necessary escort of the fair equestrians.

"I hope you will continue your ride," he said, "and allow me to accompany you. It would be too bad that you should turn back when you had nearly reached your destination, and it would give me so much pleasure." This last was spoken in an almost pleading voice.

The color flushed into Lucille's cheeks, as she said: "I think, since we've come so far, we might as well keep on, if Lord St. Maur is quite sure it will not inconvenience him."

They proceeded more slowly now, and by the time they had reached the beginning of the long ascent to the top of the hills all reserve had vanished, and they were perfectly at ease.

The narrow winding way went in zigzag courses, up the rough, stony sides of the prominence, the recent rains having washed the earth out, leaving great boulders in the path, which the horses, with some difficulty, had frequently to climb over, so that single file was maintained, and all were too busily engaged in picking out the way to talk, excepting an exclamation now and then. At last the top was reached, and as the atmosphere was exceedingly clear, their labor and trouble was fully repaid.

An open space, or table land of rock, with even surface, covered the crowning ridge, the approach was from the rear, whilst in front was a precipice many hundred feet in sheer descent. St. Maur dismounted and throwing the bridle loosely over his arm advanced near to the ledge. "If you will come closer," said he to the other two who were holding back, "you can obtain a much better view: there is absolutely no danger. I will hold your horses in check."

Stretched out below were miles upon miles of beautiful country. Towns, villages, forests and winding streams dotted the landscape, whilst more immediately beneath, the peasants tilling, and the cattle grazing in the fields could be distinctly seen. The three gazed enraptured at the sight.

"Is not that Wentworth, away over to our right?" said Lucille.

"Yes," replied he. "You can just see the chimneys of Carleton Park rising over the trees beyond."

"I can just make them out," she answered.

"Is not Maurland Towers just visible through this opening?" inquired Bessie.

"Yes," said St. Maur. "I can see this point very plainly from the windows, it is one of its prettiest vistas."

"How plainly it shows even here," said Lucille. "I suppose that it is because it is such a great building. How far do you suppose it is?"

"It must be twelve or fifteen miles at least," returned he.

"I should imagine it was fully that," said Bessie. "Just think how far we've come." A fleecy cloud was floating over, for an instant hiding the sun, but its rays escaping through the rifts, fell partially about Wentworth and seemed to centre upon the walls of Maurland Towers, lightening them up resplendently for a moment.

"See how grand it appears now," she continued, calling their attention. "Do you know, Lord St. Maur, that we were just saying, before you came up, how happy you must, or rather ought to be. I do so want to see all the grand things that Capt. Trevellyan has told me of there, especially the gardens and conservatories, they must be perfectly beautiful."

"Nothing would give me greater pleasure than to show them to you, if I could only induce you to come and see them. As you say, I *am*, or rather ought to be particularly happy at this moment," he continued smiling, "it would be a very surly fellow indeed, who would not be so in my place; especially since I have been the subject of two young ladies' conversation. What were your judgments, good, bad, or indifferent?"

"A little of each," rejoined Bessie. "To tell you it was all of the first might endue you with what you haven't yet—vanity. To tell you it was all of the second would be a prevarication, and as to the last—well, that would be partly an untruth too, so you can imagine anything you please. But I did not think that you were given to compliments, they don't seem natural to you."

"Believe me," said he earnestly, looking at Lucille. "Since you have taken the trouble to think about it at all,"—with a peculiarly sweet smile, and it may be slightly lower—"I am very happy at present. You are right, Miss Egerton; I rarely pay compliments, because I do not think it is right to say what we may neither mean nor believe, and compliments are usually of that class. In what I say I always try to express my own feelings truthfully."

"No one could ever mistake you," rejoined Bessie, warmly. "I like to see men fearless in their expression, who never try to wound or salve over."

"I wish we had brought a field glass," said Lucille,

"we might descry our truant groom. Probably he is awaiting our return in a shady nook, or regaling himself over a tankard of ale. We had better turn back now. It is a lovely view. I'm very glad that we came."

After giving a last lingering look they turned and commenced the descent.

The coming up had been difficult, but to go down was far worse — the rolling stones and narrow washed-out gulleys making it anything but pleasant, not to say dangerous. St. Maur took the lead and tried to pick out the easiest paths, whilst the others followed closely. Whilst in this order, the horses walking at the bottom of a deep gutter filled with loose rocks, so deep that the ladies' riding skirts dragged along the edges. Lucille's horse stumbled and went down on his knees. Her feet instantly touched the ground, and she found herself standing upon good firm earth, with the reins still in her hand, whilst the horse was in the act of rising beside, though somewhat beneath, her.

In an instant St. Maur was at her side. He was too good a horseman not to know, by a glance at the situation, that she was not injured.

"Are you frightened — is your horse hurt?" said he, quickly, gently taking the reins from her hand.

She was not scared, but even the best of horsemen or horsewomen will feel a little nervous from the shock of finding themselves quickly displaced from a firm seat in the saddle and transported suddenly to the

earth. Raising her riding-habit from around her feet, she stepped back, letting St. Maur take possession of the reins.

"I am not frightened," she said, "but fear my horse is hurt."

The animal was resting all his weight upon one leg. St. Maur got down in the gully and lifting his foot, reported him quite lame.

"Oh! I am so sorry," murmured Lucille.

It was her own palfrey, that her father had given her, and in her sympathy for her favorite, she forgot her own situation. St. Maur had not.

"I will change your saddle to my horse," he said.

"Then what will you do?" she exclaimed.

"Oh! walk, to be sure," he laughed, "and lead your horse."

"But I don't want you to do that."

"I can't see what else we can do," said he.

"Why can not I walk?" She knew perfectly well he would'nt let her, but she would have proposed anything rather than put him to more trouble.

"If you only knew how your suggestion pained me, you would scarcely make it," he replied in a lower tone, all the time changing the saddles and continuing: "A lady has never been on my horse, but he is very gentle, and, I will answer for it, behaves well." By this time he had readjusted the saddles.

"Come," said he, "it's all ready."

"She came forward. St. Maur held his hand for her

to place her foot in. She had never mounted in this way before.

"How am I to get up?" she enquired doubtfully.

"Place your foot in my hand," he answered, "and use it as a stepping block."

"This was novel to her. She did not know what to do. There was no help for it, no way of getting out of it.

"I'm afraid I can't do it," said she hesitatingly, wishing to gain time.

"Oh, don't fear," he rejoined smiling, "it's very easily done, believe me."

During this epilogue Bessie had sauntered a little ahead; she turned now, and seeing the cause of hesitation, cried: "Don't be afraid, Lucille, I have often done it. It's very easy."

"You see, Miss Egerton doesn't mind it, so you might as well submit with a good grace." He knew her diffidence and shyness, and glanced round to discover if there were a log or stump near, for he saw her embarrassment; but there was nothing in sight that would answer, so added: "There's no help for it."

"I will try," she said, coming forward, but feeling very foolish and awkward, and in her confusion putting up the wrong foot.

"No, that's wrong, the other foot," he said.

"Just see how awkward I am — this one? and she held up her dainty little foot just peeping out from under the skirt.

“Yes, that’s right, but you’ve hardly given me hold enough — now then — up!”

Lucille sprang, but she had been too chary with her foot; she managed to grasp the pommel, but the animal, although very gentle, being unaccustomed to a riding habit, edged slightly off and down she came, and would have fallen had not St. Maur caught her in his arms.

“There! I told you how awkward I was,” she exclaimed, turning crimson, and quickly releasing herself, more confused than ever. “And Bessie, I think it very unkind in you to laugh at me.” She had in the distance detected a smile on that young lady’s face from whence comfort had been expected.

“I could’nt help it to save my life,” replied the latter, unable to restrain her mirth. “I do wish you could have seen yourself, so gracefully sliding down,” and both girls broke out in laughter.

St. Maur was too supremely happy to laugh. His face was only lit up with a sweet, happy smile. These moments were being some of the happiest of his whole life’s experience — too precious to be thrown away in laughter.

“What am I to do?” cried Lucille, her face still flushed, and looking to St. Maur the fairest of beautiful visions. A man’s heart was going out to her — a soul crying thirstily for but a drop of the life before him, with an intensity of love that few women know how to value, — how few are ever offered.

“What am I to do?” she repeated, looking ruefully at the scene before her.

"Why, try it again. You see you wouldn't give me a firm hold on your foot and it slipped, though I suppose it was my fault. I am sure my horse will not shy, if you only will get in the saddle. Do try it again."

She had ceased her merriment and was looking at him intently. She could not help it. The deep, earnest, yet sweet and gentle look that met hers—the flushed, handsome face—spoke a great deal. It was the same she had seen so often gazing at her with a distant, tender light; and when soul speaks to soul in the tender glance of love, who can fail to read the meaning? And she knew what it meant. She did not mind delaying for a moment. A feeling she had never experienced before was stealing over her senses, and her heart beat faster.

"We have, or rather I should say *I* have, been a great deal of trouble to you to-day."

"If you only knew how much pleasure you have given me and could see the thankfulness, I hardly think you would say so."

A soft glance gleamed from her hazel eye. "Are you ready?" she said, and he held forth his hand to be again used as a stirrup.

This time she was determined to succeed. Being naturally a good rider, and taught by the best masters, there was no fear in her disposition. She was thoroughly collected, and, without any hesitancy, gave him full control. He grasped her foot strongly—in another moment she was firmly seated in the saddle.

"There," he said, arranging the reins for her, "see how easily it is done, and you did it so well."

"Thank you. I am ever so much obliged. What a splendid horse you have"—the animal was champing the bit restlessly—"but I am so sorry you have to walk."

At last they arrived on level ground. A little way farther on, there was a well-known hostelry, where his lordship said he could leave Lucille's horse in careful keeping, and get a remount for himself.

"Wouldn't you prefer to take your own horse and give me the remount, I daresay it would suit me just as well?" said Lucille, who [was] grieved about her favorite, but was very much pleased with St. Maur's.

"No; I would prefer you to remain as you are. I have always been very fond of my horse;" patting his own on the neck as he walked beside him; "but I shall like him all the better hereafter, for this day's service."

"He appears to be very well gaited," she answered, blushing slightly, "and very gentle, too. I suppose you have taught him that."

"Do you think I am gentle in my teaching?" he exclaimed, glancing up brightly.

"Yes; I think you must be kind and gentle to every thing around you."

"Thank you so much for that," he replied, earnestly. "I value it all the more because I know you mean it." And then, as if he had given his emotions wider vent

than desired: "Is this the horse I have sometimes seen you riding in the park?"

"Yes," she answered, distinctly remembering to have seen him there more than once, with the same wistful look.

"I have often met you," he said, "but scarcely knew whether to speak or not, I was so afraid you would not recognize me."

"Yes," she replied, "and — I thought the same of you."

"Well then," rejoined he, as though much relieved, "since the fault is mutual, you cannot believe how heartily I will promise to amend mine. Have you ever hunted?"

"No; I never have. Almost the first chase I ever saw, was ——"

And she broke off suddenly, a slight blush suffusing her face at the recollection.

"When I was so badly thrown, you mean, and for your kindness then I can never thank you enough. That was scarcely a fair example. I think you would enjoy seeing a fine run. I am afraid my best hunting days are over. I cannot go to the front now as well as I could, and maybe it's as well; I was getting wearied of it."

"What is that you say, Lord St. Maur?" exclaimed Bessie, falling back with the others, and only catching part of the meaning. "Not tired of hunting, I hope, because you promised to take me, and Captain

Trevellyan is to come down for the occasion. Lucille, you will have to go too; get your father to let you. Try and persuade her, Lord St. Maur."

"I am afraid my intercession would be of little use," replied he, "tried I ever so hard."

"I should be delighted to go," she replied, "but I don't know whether papa would approve. Bessie seems to think I have to consult him about everything I do. It's not that, only I wouldn't do anything that I thought might cause him uneasiness. He can hardly have me out of sight, and has not been very well since we came to this country;"—and a tear glistened in her eye—"I should say, come home, but I have been abroad so much, that the continent seems more like home than here. Besides, I don't know whether we have any hunters in our stable."

"But I have several," responded St. Maur, "and would be very much pleased if you would make use of them. The one you are on is an excellent leaper. I am sure you could manage him very well."

"I should be very glad to go," she said, "and would like to ride your horse so much. I have taken a great fancy to him," softly stroking his neck.

"Couldn't his master come in for a small share of the favors, or would his persuasions pass idly by?"

"I don't know, you might not care for them," she returned, progressing wonderfully in her first adventure, but avoiding his conscious look and immediately continuing: "Is not that the hostelry you spoke of, just

there, through the trees? I am very glad that you won't have to walk any farther; but it's quite late. See, the sun is almost setting."

"Yes, it will be night before you get home. But the moon is up even now, and at the full, so that it will be very light."

"I wonder what papa will think," said she, addressing Bessie, "when he finds us abroad at dinner hour?"

"He won't miss us before," rejoined Bessie. "I venture to say that he and Dr. Applegarth have not left that horrid room for a moment, since we left. What on earth can they see in such a lot of trash? I took a peep at them the other day, and they had fires and all sorts of things going."

"Chemistry is a wonderful science," said St. Maur. "Its research must be very fascinating. But here is our halting place." "Won't you both alight whilst I see about the change of horses?"

Hostlers rushed forth eagerly to take the horses, and the ladies dismounting, came forward with many obeisances and smiles.

"Wouldn't the ladies have a room just to fix their hair? Yes, and his lordship, does he want a fresh horse? Certainly he can have one."

They had struck upon a small, but quite celebrated place, in its way, kept by a widow, noted for her good cheer.

After arranging about the horses, St. Maur came back, and as the two girls had not yet made their

appearance, he called out to them, "Don't you think it would be as well to take a lunch, since we are here? It will only delay a few minutes, and the night will be lovely."

"It would be a capital idea," said Bessie, delighted at the suggestion.

"Miss Carleton," cried he again, "give us your vote and it shall be carried without a division, as we say in the House."

"But papa will be so uneasy," said she, hesitatingly. Her father was always first in her mind.

"I hardly think it would matter just for once," urged Bessie.

"I know he would not care if he thought I was safe and enjoying myself," replied Lucille.

"Give us your sanction, Miss Carleton," repeated St. Maur, from below. "Let's finish up with a real jolly good day."

"Well, then, yes," said Lucille. It had been a very pleasant day and she would not mar it.

It was not long before a dainty meal was served up. The establishment was put to its utmost resources on that occasion. The whole day had been something so entirely new to Lucille, and she had enjoyed it greatly, notwithstanding her mishap. As for St. Maur, he had never made himself more agreeable at the grandest State dinner, never was more pleased, never more happy. Reserve among them was at an end, and they laughed and talked merrily.

It was at such times that Lucille showed her true disposition, and a brighter, fairer, purer object, man never looked upon — so thought St. Maur.

After remounting, the horses being fresh, and the moon shining brightly, lighting up the way clear as day, in best of spirits they resumed their ride in the direction of home. As they neared Wentworth they met the Baronet in his carriage. He had been made very uneasy by their lengthened absence, but was soon appeased when he heard the story and his daughter's sweet voice telling what a pleasant day it had been to them.

"I think you had better get in with me now, and let one of the grooms take your horse."

Sir John was very polite to St. Maur, but there was a feeling he could not help exhibiting, that he preferred his daughter by his own side. He wanted no one to cast even a remote shadow between their affections, and her happiness was too precious to him, to even think in the remote distance of the future, of entrusting it to another.

"Just as you please, papa. If you would rather have me," said she.

"I have been so uneasy," he rejoined, "picturing such horrible things, that I can scarcely believe you are safe unless I have you beside me; and here comes Dr. Applegarth, who was kind enough to join in the search, so, Miss Bessie, you will have two escorts home; "and Lord St. Maur, besides thanking you for your good

services of the day toward these young ladies, I hope you will stay with us to supper; we will drive on and await your arrival."

St. Maur assisted Lucille into the carriage, at the same time accepting of the invitation, and then, with Bessie between the two gentlemen, proceeded to Carleton Park, where they found an elegant repast awaiting them.

It was a quiet party, but everything was very pleasant. Lucille had got back her old reserve. Going into the drawing-room after supper, Bessie persuaded Lucille to show St. Maur some pretty water-color drawings by her own hand. He would rather have possessed them than the handsomest pictures decking his Hall.

"Lord St. Maur," exclaimed Bessie, "I have cut out and pasted in my Prayer Book a little scrap of poetry that Captain Trevellyan said was written by you. Is it really yours? I told Lucille it was. I think there is something so sweet and sad about the words; and yet they sound like what I would imagine you to say and think."

She brought the book in which it was pasted.

"You must have been discussing me pretty thoroughly this morning," he smiled mischievously, "and would you be disappointed if I told you they were not mine," recognizing them at a glance.

"Don't try to deceive us," said she. "You couldn't, for they sound too much like you."

“Well, then, I suppose I must own their authorship. Yes, I wrote them.”

Lucille had taken the book and was perusing the lines, which ran as follows:

“CUI BONO” — A FEW OF LIFE'S LESSONS.

“To strive for some goal
None have ever attained;
To dream of some good
That might never be gained!
To cling to some hope
Anchored lightly — and then,
To weep o'er your folly
And — clasp it again!

To win many friends
Who are faithful and true
Until they are tried,
Or — until they try you!
To build castles fair
Whose proud walls Love defends,
And to weary of both
When the novelty ends.

To gather the fruit
Once forbidden to Eve,
And find that e'en Knowledge
May sometimes deceive!
To brood o'er the past,
While the present glides by;
To yearn for a Future —
Nay, grasp it — and die!

To see after all
How you've labored in vain;
How your gain has been loss,
And your loss has been gain!

How seeking for *rest*
E'er Life's struggle shall cease,
You are taught to look higher
For comfort and peace.

'Cui Bono?' What use
Are these aims and desires,
If to this world alone
Their ambition aspires?
What, indeed, if this sentence
Be o'er them unfurled:
Doth it profit a man
If he gain the whole world."

"I think them lovely," said she, looking up wistfully at him with a tender expression. "I agree with Bessie, they sound like what I imagine you would say."

"Yes, but they are not like what I feel, at least just now," he replied.

"How do you mean?" she inquired.

"I would alter, or leave them altogether unwritten, especially the last words of the second verse."

She re-read the lines and looked at him for a moment. Their eyes met. There was no color in his face, it was pale, calm as marble. Hers was flushed.

"I like them better as they are," she said, and closed the book.

He glanced at the clock; it was getting late, time to depart. He had thought of no future, farther than the day, and that he was near her, and now he must leave her, with no certainty of a near meeting. Would she, could she care for him? not unless her love was like his, and that could not be.

"I must say good night," said he presently, with a sigh, rising to go. "I suppose you are fatigued and heartily tired of me."

"I don't think I have ever passed a more pleasant day," she returned, with a reproachful look, "and I thank you so much, for we owe it entirely to you."

"It is very good of you to say so, and I suppose I shall not see you again for a long time."

"Then it will be your own fault, for you must come and see us. Bessie will not remain much longer, but is coming back in the autumn."

St. Maur's heart beat with delight, and then a sickening dread came over him, that he could not win her after all.

"My aunt, the Duchess of Farnborough," he said, addressing both Bessie and Lucille, "is coming to the Towers in the autumn. I should so much like you to know her, I am sure you would like her. She says that the Towers are growing rusty from want of use, and as I am utterly at a loss to know how to manage such things, has promised to come down, and I am to rely entirely upon her advice for a grand entertainment. I hope you will come. If Miss Egerton would let me know the time of her visit, it shall be arranged to suit her stay."

He colored a little, thinking perhaps his manner of invitation was not usual, and premature.

Bessie was delighted, of course; but Lucille only said:

“I have been out very little, but shall be very glad to come.”

He would like to have lingered longer, but there was no further excuse, and in bidding the others adieu, he held out his hand to her, saying:

“I shall take advantage of your permission to call, and trust you will not weary of me.” And then he was gone.

CHAPTER XX.

PREPARATIONS.

THE first days of autumn had come—the saddest of the year—when the time is approaching for the green forest trees to change into scarlet and gold; when the birds are commencing to whistle in the stubble and under the hedges; when all things in God's nature seem harmonious and complete.

St. Maur had been twice to Carleton Park during Bessie's stay, but when he had called again, after her departure, Miss Carleton was "not at home." Besides this, he had met her driving out with her father, and beyond a few courteous sentences at these times, it was all that he had seen of her.

The Duchess of Farnborough was now exercising full sway over Mourland Towers. Numbers of artisans from London had made their appearance soon after her arrival. Painters, carpenters, decorators, and above all, a "Chief Artist,"—a celebrated person, without whose supervision, no grand affair could properly take place. His taste, his suggestions, must first be consulted and accepted. He was peremptory and powerful; insisting that his ideas should be carried out to the very letter, or he would not answer for consequences. His scope extended over everything, from

the great dome, where the revolving light was to be placed, to the most shaded flirtation seats in the remote nooks of the garden. This man brought an additional score of assistants with him. Even the thoroughly professional gardeners at the Towers, were astonished. Pipes were laid in different directions, fountains were made to cast their spray in every conceivable shape, and always where the light would reach, so that the drops sparkled like diamonds. Beautiful grottoes were created, with limpid, plashing streams passing through them. Great lanterns of stained glass hung in the trees, and a vast number of all sorts of seats, from the light wire chair to the heavy rustic tête-à-tête were placed in the most convenient spots. Invitations had been liberally issued, not only to the elite of fashion in London, but to the provincial, and above all, the county magnates, great and small.

It was the talk of the town and country, in great mansions, and at the clubs. Men who were making shooting arrangements, paused. "By George, we must go there; wouldn't miss it for the world." But an invitation was by no means to be easily obtained. Maurland Towers was again to be thrown open—the place which had often entertained royalty before, Maurland Towers, which, almost above all other places in the Kingdom, afforded the best and most numerous advantages of entertainment.

The Cashbids were coming, having been specially invited to the Towers. When the Duchess had asked:

"Is there any one you think might possibly be left out," handing St. Maur a long roll of expected guests, compiled by the "Chief Artist," who was aware, even better than his employers, who had been or ought to be invited, St. Maur glanced at the papers:

"My dear aunt, how can I tell? I suppose Smith knows all about such matters."

His lordship was easy, for he knew that the Carleton Park invitations had been dispatched by special messenger. He paused a moment and then turned to the other side.

"Perhaps I forgot to mention, but I don't see the names of the Cashbids. Room must be found or made for them."

"The Cashbids? Who are they?" returned his aunt, in a tone of astonishment.

"They are the near relations of Miss Egerton, who visits at Carleton Park," he answered, carelessly.

"Is *that* the attraction, Erroll? I trust you will not allow yourself to be led into such a fatal mistake as a 'mesalliance,' answered the Duchess, in a tone of alarm.

"My dear aunt," he answered, his pride aroused, "has there been anything in my past conduct or life, that would justify such a suspicion? I hold the young lady I have named, in as high respect as though she were a sister, and I doubt if there is a sweeter or better girl. But don't fear. My matrimonial inclinations, I think, are destined to be delayed until a day so

far in the future, that surmises at present are but wasted time."

"Don't be offended, Erroll. I spoke so because I know the temptations and evils which surround young men of your position. No one could have resisted them better. We all feel proud of you, and one of the happiest moments of my life would be when I could see you well and happily married."

Thus Mr. and Mrs. Cashbid were among the guests at Maurlands, and Captain Trevellyan came down with them, much to their satisfaction. To be sure, Miss Egerton was one of the party and had to be dropped at Carleton Park, whence, by special and previous arrangement, Dr. Applegarth was to escort her and Lucille to "the Towers." The Guardsman had been very attentive, and kind indeed, in looking after trunks, boxes, satchels—all the minutia of a party destined for a pleasure trip, and had seen to their safe transportation from the railway.

St. Maur had observed his friend's intimacy with the Auctioneer's family, and was not long in attributing it to its proper source. He plainly saw how Trevellyan was fascinated, and that Bessie had at least a warm friendship for him. He could also observe the tender solicitude and anxiety for Rufus Applegarth, which it was impossible for her to conceal. Such a thing might be quite natural toward a person who had known her so long and intimately, but he thought he had detected those looks and actions which only bespoke one thing.

St. Maur felt deeply grieved for Trevellyan, for it required no second vision to prophesy the inevitable result. But he felt sorry for her also. Rufus Applegarth was so immured in his gloomy forebodings, that he was entirely unconscious of a passion he was casting aside. He was too mournful, too preoccupied, to make a high, cheerful spirit like hers happy. She must have known him before this had come over him; but the question was, would it ever leave him? Certainly it had grown rapidly within his knowledge, and it might lead to worse in the future. He shuddered at the thought.

CHAPTER XXI.

THE FIRE.

WENTWORTH was crowded. The Great George was filled to overflowing. Every room in the village not engaged by the invited was occupied with their retainers. Hundreds were to remain at "the Towers," but a town would scarce have held the expected guests.

Pretty Dolly Spiggott was kept busy, not only in household matters and attentions to the company, but in listening to the scores of compliments hourly received from a suddenly arisen host of admirers, quite to the chagrin of Jerry Hardin, the carrier, who was reaping a harvest, and closely occupied from morn till night, much to his sorrow but more to his gain.

Wentworth was pleased, was heaping praises without stint upon the young and liberal Nobleman, for such a shower of coin had never been seen since the days when the old Lord was wont to throw his doors open to entertain royalty.

The evening has come at last: and the soft moonlight shone over the Towers, now ablaze with artificial illumination. Equipages are rolling under the great arched gateway to the portal, horses are prancing, footmen calling, dainty feet tripping up the carpeted way.

St. Maur is standing beside the Duchess in the immense drawing-room, receiving his guests. The rooms are filled, not crowded, it would take a regiment or two to crowd these spacious halls. Apartment after apartment are a sheen of resplendence, and gleaming with youth and beauty. The windows are thrown open, and the soft breezes pass through. Sweet scented fountains play constantly in many places. A numerous and well disciplined array of servants, in the livery of the family is on active but unobtrusive duty. Princes of the blood and foreign, with the flower of nobility are there; many with hoary heads, some in the prime of life, some in eager youth, and there is a feminine galaxy there, from "sweet seventeen," to wrinkled seventy.

Mrs. Cashbid was one of that varied company—Bessie had entered a mild protest against gaudy attire—and her appearance was not *very* remarkable. Her excellent husband occasionally and involuntarily was "going, going, gone," and entirely out of his element; recognizing scarcely any person, he was, if restless, generally silent.

"By George, but this is handsome though," exclaimed the Duke of Farnborough, inwardly giving much credit to the Duchess.

"Yes! very," replied a Nobleman, standing at his elbow, after carefully adjusting his glasses, and taking a searching look at every thing. "Handsomest get-up I ever saw, would 'nt have missed it for a good deal. Don't often see such things."

"*Very* handsome indeed," repeated the Duke emphatically, secretly rejoicing at the Duchess' success. "I've been here to such things in his father's lifetime, but I think this surpasses them all."

St. Maur was not all the time by the side of his aunt. When the arrivals began to lessen he would steal to the open casement to ascertain if a certain equipage long expected had come, and as each disappointed him returned to his position with a troubled mind. A longer interval than usual ensued, another arrival and he again glided to the window, scarcely caring to hide his impatience. Yes, there was the Carleton livery. He would not have recognized another in all the county. He saw Rufus Applegarth descend with Bessie. This was sufficient, he was confident who would follow, and sprang back to his place to receive them. They came in, but by themselves. *She* must have lingered in the ladies' boudoir. He shook hands with them—Bessie and the Doctor—and looked the enquiry he did not speak.

"I am so sorry," said Bessie, "that Lucille could not come."

"Not come?" he repeated. This was a disappointment indeed. He had fancied so many things for that one night.

"Sir John was not well and she would not leave him," said the Doctor. "We waited until the last moment, and that was the reason of our being so late."

Surrounded by all this gayety, pomp and splendor,

St. Maur felt as if he could almost curse his fortune, so bitter—though he subdued it—was his disappointment.

Trevellyan, who had also been upon the lookout, came up as soon as politeness would allow, and took complete possession of Bessie.

“I shall see you again,” she said, turning to Rufus Applegarth in an anxious tone, as if afraid she would miss him. “Remember you are to give me one dance, and I shall claim it.”

“If you don’t I shall,” spoke up Trevellyan laughing. “That is, with Miss Egerton’s permission.”

“I am sure I could not have a better representative,” returned he, in the same mood, but with that absent peculiar look, and so they swept off.

St. Maur neared the casement, once more casting a lingering look towards Carleton Park. He could see the tall mansion, dark and gloomy in contrast with the brightness around him. There was a ray of light from one window; could it be Lucille’s? Could her thoughts be of him? And his heart thrilled with ecstasy. Yes. She *was* thinking of him, she could not tell why, few, or many reasons might be given; but she *did* think of him, as she sat at her open casement, at intervals casting a glance in the direction of Maurland Towers.

* * * * *

St. Maur wheeled and went off among the company. He tried to be cheerful though he had lost interest in

the whole scene. The music crashed, the ball began. He had to place himself in the first set, composed of those present of highest rank—the dance in which he had intended Lucille to stand beside him. A foreign Princess was his partner, the heir to a throne was opposite.

The set went off well; he promenaded, occasionally stopping at different groups to say a pleasant word, tried to make himself agreeable to every one, but his heart was heavy. This which he had planned and looked forward to, his ardent hopes, his sweet expectations, all come to naught. Once or twice he had looked to see if the light was still in the window of Carleton Park. He had stopped to gaze at it and commune with his own heart, and then back to fulfill the duties of a host. Yes, there it shone, dimly as before. She was still thinking of him, still with a book in her hand.

* * * * *

The sumptuous supper was over. The dancing had ceased for a while. There was a lull in the babel of voices and ringing laughter. Hundreds, even more, were either carelessly promenading the spacious halls and saloons, or seated throughout the terraced gardens, where the radiant streams of light fell on the variegated flower beds, damp with the dew, reflecting them in a thousand different hues. The moon had sunk behind the tall dark woodlands that covered the hills, only within the circle of the Towers' rays was light, beyond was darker and blacker by the contrast.

St. Maur seized a leisure moment to get out of the now heated and close apartments. Rufus Applegarth, who had spent the greater part of the evening in wandering over the grounds, was just returning. St. Maur spoke to him, and the two stood a moment looking on the animated scene before them. Suddenly a bright, thin tongue of flame darts up into the sky, small, but fiercely red. It leaps high for so thin a column, ceases, disappears for a moment, again shooting up higher than before, and remains.

“What can be the meaning of that?” exclaimed the Doctor.

A moment more it was made plain.

“My God! Carleton Park is on fire,” he whispered hoarsely. St. Maur is calm. His line of action is decided upon in an instant. He says, distinctly but rapidly, to Rufus Applegarth: “Trevellyan is inside. Tell him to follow me. Then spread the alarm as quickly as possible. All the help possible will be required.

Rushing to the stable, he called for a groom; shouts again, but no one answers. Grooms and stablemen are too busy eating and drinking to be there. Entering the stable he puts saddle and bridle on the nearest horse, and mounts. Time is precious. He does not take the road, but strikes across the country. It is his favorite steed, the one that she has ridden, and needs no urging. The noble animal feels that this hot haste must be for a purpose, and strains every muscle.

St. Maur watches the flame in the distance, not heeding the obstacles in the way.

At Carleton Park the danger now is known. The woman at the gates has thrown them open, and stands in the midst, screaming and dazed with fright. St. Maur dashes past her, onward to the house. Some few servants are there—most of them being away at the Towers—though each instant brings fresh help, and a press of breathless, shrieking, panting people was fast collecting.

“Where is Sir John?” St. Maur questions hurriedly.

“He was here a moment ago, but has returned for some papers of value.”

“And Miss Carleton?”

“We could not restrain her; she returned after her father.”

He dashed up the steps that formed the entrance. Most of the building is now enveloped in flames. Sir John was staggering out, half stifled by the smoke. St. Maur grasps his arm tightly, exclaiming:

“Where is she?” But the other is so confused that he cannot understand, or answer.

“Where is Lucille?” he repeats. There was no title of courtesy; his whole soul was centered in that question. Trevellyan has come and stands beside him, also awaiting the answer. He is pale, very pale, but his eye is bright, like St. Maur's, and perfectly calm.

“Great God! I left her but a moment ago outside.

Has she followed me?" cried her father, and the papers dropped from his grasp. He called incoherently, "Lucille! Lucille! where are you?"

His spirit was dulled. A great dread had seized him for the being whom he loved most on earth, in whom his hopes were wrapt. The one great idol of his heart was in danger."

Rufus Applegarth came up and tried to lead him away. He fell, unconscious. Other assistance came. They carried him, by Mr. Leslie's order, to the Rectory.

St. Maur turned to Trevellyan and said, huskily:

"I will go in and find her. Watch for me; if I come to an opening, do the best you can."

Water was standing near. Dipping his handkerchief in it and tying it closely over his mouth, he dashed into the wreathing smoke. Some one passed him on the way out; he could discern it was the house-keeper. Reaching the stairway, which way should he turn? Oh, Heaven, in mercy guide! He must not pause. The fire was just kindling along the railing, and the smoke was terrible. An unknown impulse directs him up. In the midst of the flight, he stumbles upon a recumbent, motionless form, stooping down—for instinct teaches whom it is—he carefully, tenderly lifts the inanimate figure in his arms. The steps cannot be retraced, they are in one sheet of flame. He must keep on higher. He cannot ask Lucille to direct him, for she is senseless. Feeling full confidence in Trevellyan, not a doubt for a moment crossed his

mind, but that he is now watching, waiting for him. Up he keeps—a furnace below and around—each step a pyramid of time. Coming to a long passage where the flames are at either end—the fierce, roaring, upward draught partially tended to clear the air—a door is in front. St. Maur knows, he can not tell why, that he is entering her room, and that it fronts the lawn. He closed the door fast behind him, as the sparks drove in gusts against it.

Yes, he was in her chamber. Even in that awful moment its impress was forever stamped upon his memory.

Gently laying her down, he went to the window and saw Trevellyan watching, waiting. How calm, how pale his face looks, even from this distance. It is sufficient. Trevellyan has recognized him, and St. Maur thinks no more of what he shall do. A leap would be certain death; nothing he could put together would reach one-half the distance. Near at hand is an aquarium, the little gold fish floating almost motionless in their element, the jet of water still playing fresh and limpid through it. Catching a cup of this he revives her. For an instant she is at a loss to understand her position, and then recognizes the full extent of the situation. Gently taking her by the hand, he led her to the window, pointing to it as their single mode of escape. She can hardly hear his voice, so loud is the roaring, mingled with the crash of falling timbers.

Below, the ground is dark with people. They can

not see Trevellyan for the moment, but this does not trouble St. Maur, who knows that all that human power can do, will be done.

When Trevellyan turned from St. Maur to take his stand, there was determination in every feature. He had made up his mind to act, and would do it; but there was a sadness in his eye, and unconsciously he murmured: "Better love hath no man than this, that he lay down his life for a friend."

He made what preparations he could. Thomas Spiggott was there, also Jerry Hardin and Nicholas Toner. They recognized in the Guardsman a leader, and as he directs, obey his bidding unquestioning. He had ordered ropes and a ladder to be brought, all the while keeping his eyes upon the windows; as fast as the flames burst through and dimmed one, turning his gaze to another, until there are but three left. Still as the chances become less, he murmurs—it seems as if the words are grafted on his spirit: "Better love hath no man—than this—that he lay down his life—for a friend."

At last St. Maur appears, and now he is all activity. By his direction, a ladder is placed against the marble portico, which is strong and will stand. The surgeon has returned from the Rectory and is at its side. Trevellyan mounted the ladder; there is no imminent danger here. The walls are thick and will hardly fall as yet, if at all. Rufus Applegarth is behind him; the others hold the structure up. They reach the top of the portico.

"Help me to pull the ladder up," demanded the Guardsman.

This was cutting off all return, but the Surgeon did not pause. They drew it up. Above them was a mass of fire. The heat where they were standing was intense, but the breeze carried the smoke off. There was a wide, ornamental ledge running around the drawing-room windows, sufficiently wide for a man to walk on; an act of no difficulty at any other time. Trevellyan had marked it before. They placed the ladder between two of the burning apertures.

"Hold it fast," he cried.

Rufus Applegarth made no protest. Perhaps it was one man's life for two; it might be a chance for his own.

"Toss me another rope," shouted Trevellyan.

It was pitched up with some effort by those below. The Guardsman coiled one around each arm, taking his coat off and tying it tightly around his head, just leaving sufficient opening to see. Then he steadily mounts again, round after round, without an instant's pause. As he grasps the coveted ledge, it is so hot that his hands are instantly blistered. But the end must be gained. His stress of mind is so great that he scarcely feels the pain; it is rather a numbness. Standing erect upon the moulding—on either side of him the blaze shot up and outward with fearful velocity. The way is but a few feet beneath the sills; crouching down, he took a long breath and then crept swiftly forward.

Those below shut their eyes or turned away, as he passes the burning, blazing casement—emerging on the other side, grasping for a hold—but he is there. Pausing for a moment to see his way, he must pass beneath one more before he can with certainty throw the rope to its destination.

Blackened and burned he crawls on. Again vanishing from those who have the hardihood to gaze, and reappearing more blackened, more burned. A loud, irresistible shout bursts from the multitude below.

Trevellyan looked up and saw them both above him. Thank God he is here. There is no more fire to pass through. St. Maur has tied the few things he could together and flung them out, but they will scarcely reach Trevellyan's height. He would descend, but it would hardly bear his weight, and if not, she would be left alone. Trevellyan's shoes, though scorched, have protected his feet, but his hands are terribly burned. Reaching the flaunting line, he tried to tie his rope to it, but his fingers were useless. His first intentions must be followed out. Looking up, the coat bound about his head fell, consumed and charred, to the ground. He tried to calculate his distance well, steadied himself and taking both ropes, tossed them high and clear. One rises to St. Maur's outstretched hands with the utmost precision; the other is blown swiftly away, and then—his work is done. Trevellyan reels, his head has grown dizzy; he grasps wildly for support, then tottering, falling, leaps madly out.

Applegarth, who had left his perilous position, rushed forward with others, and bore the quivering body away.

"Is he killed?"

"No; his lips are moving — hush."

"Better love — hath no man than this — that — he lay down — his life — for a friend."

St. Maur had lost no time; breaking the glass, he tied the rope tightly to the sash, and first taking the precaution to wrap a wet towel about his hand, gently but firmly wound his arm around Lucille. She did not utter a word; there was nothing she could say or do.

"Clasp your hands around my neck," he said, "and hold tightly, it is our only hope."

He commenced to descend gradually, carefully — the rope, through the covering, rasped and lacerated his hand horribly, cutting even to the bone. As they neared the ground, there were strong arms and ready hands to receive them. First letting Lucille down gently among them, he let go the swaying rope and sprang to the earth. She was safe, thank God.

"Where is Trevellyan?"

"Under yonder tree. The Doctor is with him."

St. Maur passes amid the throng, who draw back to open the way. A strange motley appearance they make: ladies and gentlemen, coachmen, laborers and peasants — the whole crowd lit up by the red glare of the flames.

By far the greater number, especially the ladies, had remained at the Towers. The dance had ended, many had gone home, and all dispersed. Most of the gentlemen had rushed to the conflagration, whilst small parties and groups were drawn up on the terrace, witnessing in horror the disastrous spectacle from afar.

Bessie had hastened to Carleton Park with Rufus Applegarth, but had not been a spectator long, before fainting, and did not return to consciousness until the surgeon came for her assistance with Trevellyan.

St. Maur came to the little group. Bessie, Dolly, Spiggott and others were trying to relieve the sufferer in the modes directed by the surgeon. He looked down broken-hearted at the sad sight; his grief was great. The others drew back. Kneeling down by the temporary couch that had been improvised —

“Is there no hope?” he said, in a trembling voice, addressing the surgeon, for he saw Trevellyan was in a stupor.

“There may be, for a short period — eventually none. Listen, he is speaking.”

Trevellyan opened his eyes vacantly. Presently he recognized the face stooping over him; a peaceful, restful look shadowed his face.

“Erroll, is that you?”

“Yes; can I do any thing for you?” he cried, brokenly. What can he say? He knows too well for whom the life has been sacrificed.

“Is *she* safe?”

"Yes; we owe our lives to you."

For a moment he is quiet and the sufferer is silent, and then he said, painfully, "My dream; do you remember?"

"Yes," replied St. Maur, scarcely able to control his voice.

"Not all true though, Erroll; thank God, not all true. There were two lives; this is only one," and he sank off again.

"He must be taken to a more fitting place immediately," said the surgeon. "If there is hope, even for a time, it must be by prompt and careful measures."

With the assistance of those around, Trevellyan is lifted into an easy vehicle, the Surgeon and St. Maur upon either side supporting him, and carefully they take him to Maurland Towers.

Bessie hastened to the Rectory to be with Lucille, and all her comfort was needed.

Sir John never recovered from the first shock, and in the same cold, gray light that shone down upon that sad cortege to the Towers, his life passed away, and Lucille was alone in the world.

For weeks she was ill at the Rectory, too ill to see any one save Bessie, who never left her side. Gradually strength and calm, if not hope, returned.

CHAPTER XXII.

LITTLE FAN'S CAPTURE.

THE pawnbroker sat in the midst of his miscellaneous surroundings, his doors wide open to admit the autumn breezes. The old man was evidently enjoying the fresh air, such as it was. His restless eye wanders from the street to the door, from the door to the windows, ceaselessly back and forth as though the spirit within knew no rest. Presently Daniel comes and he questions him sharply.

"Did you say you gave Squint my message yesterday."

"I left it for him, but the word was that he was 'nt werry well."

"I suppose he's drunk and can't come, so I must go to him. Stay here until I return," and he shuffled off.

Daniel looked after him, and barely was the retreating figure out of sight, ere Richard, formerly "Slummer's Dick" walked rapidly by without noticing the boy, who eyed him suspiciously and warily. They have not exchanged greeting since that memorable event when Richard was the recipient of little Fan's charity. Daniel observed that his former paragon in the halcyon days of success, had been lingering in the vicinity of his past scenes of triumph longer than an expectation

of re-employment in his old situation would appear to warrant, and had shown a greater partiality for the immediate neighborhood of the pawn-shop than the flaring gin palace at the corner. The boy had his misgivings as to the intentions of Richard toward the pawnoffice and its aged owner.

The pawnbroker was pressing forward to Mr. Squint's. He announced that he had come on a little matter of business, which would not take long.

"If so, sit down and let us hear it," said the attorney.

Moses Mosler did not proceed to open his business at once. On the contrary, he talked of a dozen irrelevant subjects, until sharply recalled to the subject matter by the lawyer.

"Oh!" exclaimed the Jew, "I came to see if you had heard of the fire?"

"What fire?" was the surly rejoinder.

"The burning of Carleton Park," continued Moses, vainly trying to conceal embarrassment, "the newspapers contain full accounts."

"I have not seen the papers for the last two days," said the lawyer, giving his visitor a searching look.

"So, it is burned, is it? That's very strange Moses, very strange," and Mr. Squint appeared to ruminate. "Have you been on one of your customary pilgrimages of late?"

"I had a little business up the country the other day," the Jew replied doggedly. "That's neither here nor there. I've come to talk about this matter. Sir John Carleton is dead."

"Dead," repeated the lawyer, startled at the announcement, and springing to his feet. "Not *killed*?" And his face was an ashen hue.

"Not so bad as that. Natural enough he died from the effects of over excitement."

Mr. Squint sat down again with a great sigh of relief. "Moses," said he, lookingly fixedly at him. "I want to hear no more of this. It is nothing to me whose house is burned, or who dies, nor do I care to know who kindled the fire, or what caused the death."

The Jew's face was pallid as he returned. "Who knows less about this than I."

"Take care," uttered the lawyer warningly, "that you know nothing about such things beforehand. I tell you, Moses, there is something about this I don't like. I'm not over squeamish and have had a taste of justice in my day, but I don't like dealings with a man who has any suspicion of — of blood upon his hands."

The old man rose up trembling and shaking. "Hush, hush!" he whined, "don't say *that*. There's nothing wrong with *me*. Let us talk of business."

The lawyer was silent for a while. He put his own interpretation upon the other's conduct.

"Well," he exclaimed at last, "I'm perfectly willing to drop it." Then in a lighter vein. "This will put a different aspect on our little case. It makes it all the safer and harder to get out of."

"Yes," answered the Jew, "things will go smoothly enough now."

"Looks as if it happened just to suit us," said the attorney.

"Could'nt have been better," returned the other, with a ghastly laugh.

"We must immediately make up our minds how to act," said the lawyer. "The Carleton estate is very large, Moses, very large," he added enthusiastically, scenting the spoils from afar.

"What shall be our first step?" enquired the Jew eagerly, forgetting in his greed his past discomfiture.

"I will have to see Proctor first," was the answer. "As to Miss Carleton, as you have already had dealings with her—if necessity compels it, you can attend to that part. I've had enough to do with womenkind," jerking his thumb with a melancholy look toward the adjoining room, where Mrs. Squint was supposed to be. "It's lucky," he continued, "we did not commence too soon, for everything was prepared. Rosa and Madame Carleton will be here in a day or two with the squalling brat. Mrs. Squint has consented, thinking it a *bona fide* case of restitution, and has gone in for justice too. I think I had better see Proctor to-morrow—" The speaker broke off suddenly, interrupted by a warning finger held up by the other, and a meaning nod in the direction of the side door where he entered, and whispering the attorney to keep on speaking, that gentleman, perhaps understanding this ambiguous behavior, delivered a short, eloquent, but wholly unintelligible harangue to the walls, ceiling, and mantel-shelf in particular, whilst

the Jew gradually, with mincing steps on tip-toe, stole toward the entry.

When little Fan answered the pawnbroker's unexpected summons at the front door, it was with no small fear and terror. She could not forget the dreadful impressions made by that hour spent as a captive within Daniel's sleeping closet. She could not divest herself of the reflection that there was connection between their threats of vengeance, and the beautiful lady who had so mercifully brought her home. She had pondered over it at work, and it came into her dreams, until her thoughts were a chaos of terrible imaginings, mingled with hopes of rescue.

She was in this frame of mind when the Jew had passed her in the entry, and as he entered the lawyer's apartment she took her stand beside the door, placing her ear to the keyhole in a tremor of nervous fright which was not lessened by what she overheard; she was now assured of the misfortune that had befallen and still threatened the beautiful lady. "Had not they said 'Miss Carleton?'" and her slight frame shivered with feverish excitement and even shook the door.

It was this unconscious agitation which the Jew had observed. Now the door was thrown suddenly open and he pounced upon her. She felt his long, bony fingers writhing about her neck and in her hair. Scream after scream, and piercing shrieks followed in quick succession from her overwrought spirit, until the Jew letting go his grasp with an oath, she fell to the

floor in paroxysms of violent hysterics. Mrs. Squint, who was in her invalid's retreat of the adjoining room, would have swooned had her strong constitution permitted, and even this disparity might have been overlooked had there been a sufficient number of spectators to bear testimony. But knowing she would receive no sympathy from the present company, she refrained and did the next best thing, namely, to rush to the scene of commotion, which had anything but a soothing effect upon the child, for her shrieks and screams were redoubled until exhaustion led to a protracted state of insensibility, in which confusion the pawnbroker made hasty retreat and exit amid the reproaches, upbraidings and condemnations of Mrs. Squint, who really would have fainted and exhibited unmistakable symptoms of an epileptic fit had not Mr. Squint been left as a proper safety valve to shower them upon.

CHAPTER XXIII.

THE AGENT—TEMPTATION.

MR. PROCTOR had long been the legal agent of Sir John Carleton, and was his only adviser in the management of his large revenues. These he had guarded zealously and jealously, as well for his patron as himself.

He had accepted of but a small per centage for his trouble, but in the aggregate it had mounted up in many years, and both directly and indirectly made him a rich man.

“A person whom Sir John Carleton so implicitly trusts and relies upon, must be safe and prudent indeed!” So spoke and thought others, and these speeches and thoughts were all the better for the agent, for they brought great gain, and from the poor, hard-working, industrious clerk Sir John had found him, he had developed into one of the ruling spirits of that branch of the profession.

The little dingy back room, which he had originally occupied, had bloomed into handsome outer and inner offices, with tall, polished desks, occupied by clerks who kept watch and ward over numerous japanned deed-boxes, marked thus: “Papers belonging to the estate of Lord Bailey;” “Documents pertaining to the dower

of the Duchess Dowager of Findlater;" or, as one larger than the rest, simply denoted in great white letters, "Sir John Carleton, Bart."

Mr. Proctor never saw—never pretended to see—people on the street. His glasses were kept slightly elevated, and so was his chin, showing to better advantage the white neckerchief below. Those above him attributed his abstraction as one of the necessary contingents of so vast a business, and scored it an excellent point. Those beneath him, such as Mr. Squint, regarded it as a mark of assumed superiority and conceit, for at times they were made sorrowfully aware that nothing escaped his attention, and secretly cursed him in their hearts accordingly.

Mr. Proctor was sitting in his private office, and was the same gentleman, dressed in black, that Applegarth encountered at the gates of Carleton Park upon his first arrival. Important letters and papers—for nothing except of consequence would dare to enter here—were strewn upon the desk before him. A subdued rap at the door. Clerks would not venture to approach this sanctuary without proper heralding.

"Come in."

Mr. Proctor's head is bent a little down; his eyes face the intruder over his glasses.

"Mr. Squint wants to see you, sir."

"Wants to see *me*?" as though such a thing were impossible. "What about?"

"I told him you were engaged, sir, but he has been

twice; says the business is most urgent, that he must have an interview," and, with apologetic deference, "I thought it best to inform you."

The person who gave this information was a tall, thin, threadbare, but neat and cleanly clad old man. He had been a clerk here for twenty years, chief clerk the last ten. It was Mr. Smiles, Mrs. Glover's lodger.

"Tell him to come in," was the reply, in a sharp, decisive tone, as he carefully placed some letters which he held in his hand under a paper weight.

Squint entered, his body inclining forward, hat in both hands, and bowing very obsequiously.

"Good morning, Mr. Proctor. How do you do, sir?"

"Take a seat," suggested, or commanded the other.

"Oh, yes, a seat. Thank you," and the intruder lowered himself scantily upon the edge of a chair, still holding to his hat with both hands, his feet under the chair rounds, and his body still more incumbent. "I came to see you, Mr. Proctor—"

"Might I ask your name?" interrupted that gentleman, coolly, as though he had never laid eyes on the individual before him. This *did* take Squint a little aback. Hadn't he known him for thirty years? hadn't he known him when they were both poor alike? but, it was like his cursed impudence, and the smirk that had left his face in astonishment came back. The time and place were not opportune for argument.

"Theophilus Squint, attorney-at-law," he replied,

fumbling for a card and handing it to him. He was not to be outdone in assurance.

"Well," assented Mr. Proctor, taking the bit of soiled paper gingerly, and casting it down without deigning to look at the name upon it, "Well, sir, what can I do for you?"

"I came to see you," said Squint, "in regard to a question affecting the estate of the late Sir John Carleton, Baronet."

"If you have claims to make against the estate, there is a proper office in which to file them!"

"That I am about to do, sir. I represent a large, I may say, a *very* large interest."

Mr. Proctor cocked his ears at this; he knew his deceased client had not owed a penny in the world, but deemed it best to keep silent, awaiting further developments, whilst Squint ran on.

"Before taking any decisive steps, I desired to consult you, and, if possible, obtain some information which would, to a certain degree, guide my actions."

His listener nodded and grinned an unspoken assent, the other continued.

"Did Sir John Carleton leave a will?"

Mr. Proctor hesitated. "I can scarcely give you any information until I understand the drift of your inquiries." After reflecting for a moment, it would be of small consequence to relate, being readily found out elsewhere. "But since you ask, I will say there is none, and in the absence of heirs male, Miss Carleton,

who is next-of-kin, naturally inherits the whole of the property."

"Thanks! Could you approximate anything like the value of the estate?"

Proctor could have sworn to within a thousand pounds. Again he reflected. Every one knew it was millions. Any one could tell him that, so he acknowledged:

"Yes, it is a very large amount, several millions."

"Thanks! Could you inform me of anything in particular it's invested in?"

Everybody knew he had extensive Welsh mines, that could be easily ascertained, so he again replied:

"Yes, his Welsh mines were a source of immense revenue, but," cautiously and with a searching look, "Mr. Squint, you have propounded several questions which I have cheerfully answered"—such answers, and he could not help smiling to himself—"would you be kind enough to tell me what claims you have, or represent, or what is your business. My time is much occupied," and he glanced toward the papers upon his desk.

What effrontery, thought Mr. Squint, but I'll have him yet.

"I represent the interest of a certain person whom perhaps, if you do not know, you have heard of."

"And that person is——" said Mr. Proctor, as if to assist him in his disclosures—

"The widow of his deceased brother, Madame Therese Carleton."

"I was not aware she had any interest," pursued the agent.

"The estate was strictly entailed," said Squint.

"You appear to be well posted," replied Mr. Proctor, with one of his blandest smiles, "but that entail has ended with the male line."

"But the male line has not ended. I am here to represent that very fact, and defend the cause of innocence," exclaimed the little attorney, rather fiercely.

"Madame Carleton has nothing to do with the male line of descent that I can make out," affirmed the other calmly. "Her husband died—let me see," and he looked up at the ceiling, counting upon his fingers. "This is almost November—so he died the latter part of last March. The late Baronet came to town about that time in especial regard to it, destroying such papers as had been drawn, as there was no longer a necessity for their existence."

"Yes, sir," and Squint straightened himself up as if by his dignity and future consequence he would completely extinguish the other's coolness and respectability. "Yes, sir, this has everything to do with the case in point. The brother of the late Baronet has left a posthumous son, I am glad to say, sir, a fine, healthy boy."

Strange to remark, Mr. Proctor did not look at all annihilated. On the contrary, he was even cooler than before, as replying, with a slight inclination of the head: "Madame Carleton should be congratulated. If

my memory serves me aright, from her years and former habits she must be past the time of life when such arrivals are expected."

"Many cases of the kind have occurred. Medical history abounds in them," declared Squint, emphatically.

"Do you read much history, Mr. Squint?"

Squint stared blankly at this cool assumption, but rejoined tartly:

"I have read the Law thoroughly, and know the statutes, which is the best of all history for my purpose, but," he snarled, "that is not in our discussion."

"I am obliged to you for recalling me," returned the imperturbable agent, "when was the child born?"

"Within the past few months," vaguely replied the attorney.

"So lately! and where?" questioned his interrogator.

"In France. We have the necessary proofs, physician's and nurse's affidavits, as well as registration of birth, fully authenticated."

"You speak early of proofs, Mr. Squint. No one, at least, not I, has denied your statement."

The irate attorney paused, rather nonplussed; he was not exactly sure how to proceed. "Well, sir, what will you do about it?" he interrogated, testily.

"Do about it?" repeated Mr. Proctor. "I have nothing to do about it," twisting an envelope in his hands; "I have simply to deliver over to Miss Carleton

such valuables and balances as may be in my hands. She has not signified her intention of retaining me, either as agent or adviser; until that occurs, I really cannot see what I have to do with the matter, and as I have remarked before," looking at his papers, "my time is very much occupied."

Squint was disappointed, crest-fallen and sore, though under it all, smothering his wrath.

"Well, sir, I will detain you no longer," he observed, rising and rubbing his hat. "I suppose you will communicate with Miss Carleton and ascertain what she intends to do. I presume there is a possibility of your still being retained in her employ," he wound up, sneeringly.

"Really, as I told you, I cannot perceive that it is any of my business. I expect she will hear it soon enough—possibly from you. By the way, where did you say this Frenchwoman, this Madame was?"

"I didn't say at all," cunningly responded the attorney, with a leer.

"Oh, I beg pardon, I thought you did. May I then inquire her whereabouts?"

"Will you tell me whether you shall inform Miss Carleton of this matter, or leave it to—others to do so?"

"Answer my question first," demanded the agent. Both men looked at each other—the one cool, perfectly calm—the other dissatisfied and defiant.

"Certainly," said the attorney, doggedly. "She's at my house, so as to be prepared to act."

"Indeed! that must be very pleasant for Mrs. Squint and yourself, to say nothing of the foreign lady and the infant. Rather young, I should say, for so long a journey—from the South of France, I think you said?"

"That's neither here nor there," persisted the other, in the same surly manner; "will you answer me?"

"Oh, yes! what was it?" looking down at his boots to recollect. Ah, I remember, whether I should inform Miss Carleton of the matter. I think not; I scarcely regard it as of sufficient importance. And, Mr. Squint, since you are so well versed in history, may I ask if you ever encountered in your earliest researches, the description of the child playing with edged tools, and the consequences? If you have not, take my advice and look it up. It is instructive as well as entertaining."

He touched a bell, the door opened, a clerk stood within. Squint saw that was the signal to retire, which must be obeyed. Shaking his head wrathfully, he left, muttering, "You're deep, very deep, but I'll have you yet."

After his departure, Mr. Proctor walked toward and turned his back to the fire, for it was a raw day, and drew his coat between his arms, murmuring:

"It is a well designed plot, though he couldn't deceive me. But what an undertaking! Squint could never have conceived it; it's not in him. He is acting under some experienced supervision. I wonder whose

it is. If they had any respectability about it"—and Mr. Proctor looked down complacently at himself—"and the string of evidence complete, why, it might work. I don't say *positively* it would, though it might be done. The risk would be terrible, but the stake tremendous. Yes," he reflected, slowly, "under certain circumstances, it might be done. Let me see. Last year's income was one hundred and fifty thousand pounds, though I doubt if it will be so large again. These mines turned out prodigiously. If they could get hold of them for one year before being found out, it would be a fortune for a dozen, and that's the idea, depend upon it, or compromise money. It's a great temptation for—any man."

He sat down, falling into a deeper and more profound train of thought, sometimes with his hand to his brow, sometimes with his head bent over his desk, and, again, looking vacantly before him. Mr. Proctor's reverie lasted a very long time—lasted until the shadows fell across the room—till the sun went down. Never before had papers lain before him untouched as they had that day. Again he strode to the hearth and shivered sensibly, as if there were something about him he wanted to get rid of, to shake off. His usually bloodless face turned a shade whiter as he continued to commune with himself.

"Yes, I could have managed it. My name, my influence, would have sealed it, and then there might have been hope. *Might* have been!" he repeated, mourn-

fully. "No, I must not deceive myself," and he glanced in a mirror that hung on the wall, starting back shocked at his own appearance, for even the faint, glimmering light showed the pallor of his ashen face, its lines and furrows.

"No, there would be no hope," he kept on. "Great God! why do men grow old and their hearts remain green? Why do not the years carry the sensibilities, the emotions, with them? It may not be;" and the sadness of his voice changed to professional keenness. "They've laid it deep, very deep, but a little striving, a little patience, and I can dismember and scatter it like that," waving his arm out as if to sweep it away. "One word from me would render it safe, but I can not, I will not. I would do all, dare all, brave all, to succeed, but would it help me? Would misfortune and distress make a difference? for that it would be, as, under the provisions, the Baronet had arranged and placed—suspecting nothing of this kind—for the funds to follow the present entail, which is, in the event of the failure of male heirs, to the female. But would all this have any effect? There is one prize I would do it for, and that prize, alas! can never be mine."

Mr. Proctor had gone through many struggles in early manhood—struggles through poverty, when sore temptation had beset his path—but never in his life had he been so sorely persuaded as now. Never in the weary years of contending poverty had he gone through such a contest with himself.

“Bah!” he continued, contemptuously, “I would not give that for the gold, but I would sacrifice wealth, position, honor—my life—for *her*. There would be no need of my coming to the front,” he muttered, craftily vacillating. “And, suppose it was taken, there could never be restitution. But away with such thoughts; I could never gain her love. I am not fool enough, or so blind, but I can see that. Well, so let it be. If I suffer, still no harm shall come to her.”

Mr. Proctor, as Sir John's trusted agent, had, of course, very frequently been brought in personal contact with him. Oftentimes it was requisite to visit the Continent for the better management of affairs, and of late these visits had been of more frequent occurrence. Both abroad and at Carleton Park the agent had been cursorily thrown into the society of and seen much of Lucille. In a manner she had grown up under his observation, and from the pretty, sweet, childish girl he had first known, she had expanded into the charming, beautiful, graceful young woman that it was good to look upon, and as these successive changes had ensued from childhood to woman's estate, their progress had developed a corresponding tender admiration in his heart; and, after successfully passing through the best, as well as most painful, part of life, Mr. Proctor realized there was yet a sharper, more poignant, grief in store—a hopeless love!

Picking up his hat and gloves, he passed into the outer office. There, on his high stool, a dim gas jet

just above his head, was Mr. Smiles, deep in the complexed figures of a huge ledger. The other clerks had left, glad to get rid of their tasks. None of them felt afraid of Old Smiles. Indeed, they did as they pleased with him, though standing in the greatest awe of Mr. Proctor. But Mr. Smiles would have considered it a disrespect to quit the office before his employer. For twenty years he had always stopped to see that everything was fast and the janitor's deputy at his post. He had never waited so long before as this, for it never mattered, however great the pressure of business, office hours were concluded at five o'clock, and Mr. Proctor, as in everything else, punctual to the minute, left upon the stroke.

"Why, Smiles, are you still here?" exclaimed his employer, a little startled that a human being should have been so near his thoughts. "It's later than I had any idea of."

"Yes, sir," replied the clerk; "you told me to have the Carleton accounts ready for closure at any moment, and there were a few items I desired to run over to make certain," getting down from his perch, preparatory to closing up.

Mr. Proctor winced a little at the unwitting mention of the Carleton estate, but he was pleased with himself, pleased at the determination he had come to, wondering that he could have been for a moment allured, and the revulsion of feeling was very satisfactory.

The clerk had moved nearer his employer, observing

his face. "Are you unwell, sir?" he inquired, anxiously, for of all those who respected Mr. Proctor, he entertained the greatest, his high regard even extending into an affectionate fellow-feeling for the man, and his employer, though distantly, fully recognized and felt it.

"I feel a little tired," he answered, wearily. "It's time we were both getting tired, Smiles, eh? We've worked in the same harness, side by side, for, let me see, it must be upwards of thirty years."

"Thirty, pleasing God, coming next Michaelmas; but," added the old man, quickly, "I'm not tired, Mr. Proctor, not tired yet. There's a heap of work in these old bones left." He did not know what his employer might be coming to. It sounded very much like the prelude to a discharge.

"Yes, it's been thirty years. That's a long time, Smiles. A good many changes have taken place during that period."

"Yes, sir, but none between us; we've always been the same. I've endeavored to do my duty, sir; always at my post," declared the chief clerk, nervously.

"Yes, Smiles, you've worked hard. *We* have worked hard and are both growing old together." Mr. Proctor said this sadly and kept on: "And I've been thinking, Smiles, the work was getting most beyond—almost too much for you,"

"Not at all, sir, not at all," replied the old man, quickly. "I've never complained—you will bear me out in that, sir?—I have never complained, and since

you have taken the extra clerk it has been all the easier. We could have done without him, but I couldn't persuade you so. He might go even now. I could very easily take another book. I've scarcely enough to keep me busy," he kept on, protesting.

"Well, I've been thinking it over, as I told you."

Mr. Proctor's heart was full to overflowing. He had done a good act, a good deed. At least, he had resolved to refrain from doing a bad one, and in this spirit he continued: "Yes, I've been thinking it over," he said, "and have determined to offer you a partnership—a one-fourth interest." There must be no doubt of his own controlling interest, no question of the balance of power; and he kept on: "You know the business; it's for you to say whether you will accept or not. If you want time to decide, you may have as long as you please."

"I don't think—I quite—understand you, sir," gasped the other, bewildered and almost trembling with delight.

"Not understand," said Mr. Proctor, enjoying his surprise and the effects of his pleasant goading. "Why man, I offer you a one-fourth interest in the establishment. If you take it, you will have to leave your stool there, though, and occupy the middle room. It would 'nt do for a full member of the firm to be roosted in such a place. Will you decide now?"

The old man took Mr. Proctor's hand, he would have fallen on his knees. It was not the lucrative position, not the honor he coveted, but the place so near his benefactor's—person—a sort of a share in his life.

"Come, come, Smiles, that won't do," declared his superior. "You know you've labored hard and deserve it. Come now, will you take it?"

"Take it, sir, take it? You can't feel how I thank you. What can I ever do to show you my gratitude?"

"You can do something now, right away, and that is come to the St. James and dine with me, I have some matters I want to talk over with you, now that you are a partner, and first in the morning step around to Laroque's, the detective, and tell him to come to the office as soon as possible."

The two walked out, arm in arm, for Mr. Proctor had drawn the ancient clerk's within his own.

Mr. Smiles had not dined away from Mrs. Glover's for twenty years. Nothing but the present consideration would have induced him to do otherwise. He had never been happier, and no crowned head enjoyed a meal more, or drank his rare wine with greater gusto, than old Mr. Smiles that day, and sipped his half of the pint of sherry—"dry, very dry"—by Mr. Proctor's order.

CHAPTER XXIV.

DEATH.

A BRIGHT, clear afternoon in October, the leaves in their variegated hues flecked the landscape in brilliant colors of scarlet and gold.

Audley Trevellyan was no better. It was a surprise to the medical men that he has lasted so long. The most celebrated physicians have been constantly back and forth between "the Towers" and London. Dr. Applegarth has consulted and talked with them. There was but one opinion, it was a question of time—a few days, may be weeks—nothing but a herculean constitution could have upheld so long, another would have died on the spot. His mother and sister have been constantly with him. St. Maur has never left his side. Trevellyan has no use of his limbs, and requires to be carried from place to place; bearing patiently, never murmuring, never complaining, though all is darkness. The last he remembers seeing is Erroll bending over him, in the cold gray of the morning under the great elm at Carleton Park, since then it has been total darkness. Better perhaps it is so, for the scarred face, contorted body and crippled limbs, although an ever present reality, still their actual appearance would be a painful shock; without seeing, he may feel, but cannot

realize the whole change from the great strong man he had been, and the poor deformed charred object he was.

The invalid's chair has been carried out upon the terrace, and his mother and St. Maur are with him. He can not see but likes to hear the gentle rustle of the leaves in the soft autumn breezes and feel the waning warmth of the sun, and he will speak with her here, for Miss Carleton is coming to-day. He has waited to meet her, lingering until he feared it might be too long; he has been told she was a little stronger, and then for the first time makes his desire known, and sends a message couched in the simplest form, "as he can not come to her, will she come to him, for a few moments only, he will not task her strength," and she is coming.

"Erroll, are you there?" said the sufferer, not hearing his voice, for St. Maur is silently looking down with a pitying, mournful gaze.

"I am here, is there anything you want?"

"Nothing," he replied slowly, and as if to himself, "I must be a great trouble."

"Hush, you must not speak so," exclaimed St. Maur. "You don't know how it wounds me."

"Then I will not do so again, I was only thinking, and my thoughts sometimes find utterance aloud."

Mrs. Trevellyan had stepped a little to one side, and so for the instant they were left alone, and he continued: "Do you know sometimes sitting, pondering so much, I think I can see many things clearer now than I could. I don't mean outwardly," he added with a sigh,

“for that is past, but things which I could’nt understand have a clearer meaning; and I believe it’s for the best, better that I should have found them out even in this way—and I have suffered much—than to have passed through another pain more lingering and as severe. There are some things I want to say to you, but I am not strong, you know,” and he paused for breath.

St. Maur’s keen sense had discovered long ago the inner confidences of his heart and he replied, trying to believe in his words:

“I hope you will be stronger and better soon, and then we will talk a great deal, and about anything you may please.”

“Ah! that may be a long way off,” replied Trevellyan. “I fear, never. No, what I want to say must be said now. Erroll, I know I am not long for here; there is something, I suppose, that warns every man of his approaching end; mine can not be far off. I thought it would be yesterday—the day before—it may be even now. I have no fear of death, but it is not of that I would speak. What I say must be plain, for these things have been resting on my mind.”

“Dear friend,” said St. Maur, taking his hand lovingly between his own. “If in what you desire to unfold, I can be of counsel, or help in any way, you know I would—it would be useless to say—at the cost of my life,” and his tears fell upon the hand he held.

“I would not wish you to think of that, Erroll, I

simply did as you would have done under the same circumstances, but I do not wish to speak of it. I would to God you could forget it," and he again paused for breath, continuing in a strange, eager voice:

"You know Rufus Applegarth, what do you think of him?" and he bent forward to catch the reply.

"I do not know what to make of him, there is an unaccountable mystery that is past my finding out, only Sir John Carleton knew his past history. I have thought a great deal about it, and though I absolutely know nothing, there is but one thing I can surmise as a clue to his character."

"What is it?" inquired Trevellyan quickly. "You are so much cleverer than I, that I was certain you had drawn some wise conclusions."

"You have heard of the sad story of 'Lonedrear House,' although it occurred without our memory."

"Yes, of old Mr. Kirby, and the death of his daughter at the 'Great George.' Spiggott has told me of it a dozen times at least. What of that?"

"Well, there was a child left, you may remember, if you heard it aright, and Mr. Kirby left for America."

"I recollect," and then Trevellyan said slowly as if a sudden light were breaking upon him. "You don't mean that this — this man is that child."

"Yes, I think so, nay, I am certain, for reasons that are conclusive to me," asserted St. Maur. "His coming from the United States, his taking such an interest in Lonedrear House and its story, which he cannot

conceal, his absence of mind, the sensitiveness and melancholy of his conduct about this one subject upon which he is continually questioning and endeavoring to seek information, and a hundred other things besides, seem to point it out and confirm my belief," and he went on as if in a defensive offset for these peculiarities. "All this is virtually nothing against him, for he has always deported himself as a brave, true man and courteous gentleman. I have the highest opinion of and admiration for him."

"Yes," rejoined Trevellyan, "I know him for all these too, but it is not of that I seek knowledge. Erroll, do you think it would be safe for — for a woman to marry him, to bind herself to him for life?" and he winced as if with pain.

"No, I do not," answered St. Maur.

"Why?"

"Because a man of his temperament, although possessing the best and noblest interest, will in time become morbidly sensitive, may finally seclude himself altogether from the world; and imprisoned with such melancholy — if not perhaps worse — for life, would be a hard fate indeed."

"I thought the same," said Trevellyan meditatively, "it is all true, all true, and she does not even think, or know."

"But," kept on St. Maur, "from my observation I do not think he has any marital intentions, for I believe he knows his own condition, and under any circumstances that would restrain him."

"I am glad you think so," replied the invalid, as if relieved of a burdensome idea, continuing: "Erroll, there is a woman in whom I feel a deep interest, greater than any other I have ever met. It may be you have known it before."

"Yes, I have observed it," assented St. Maur, with a gentle pressure of the hand.

"As I have said," proceeded Trevellyan, "I can see things plainer now, and I think mine — was hopeless. I think she — Miss Egerton," and he spoke the name lowly, "could never have cared for me — in the way I would wish. She loves another, you know whom. Am I correct?"

"Yes," rejoined St. Maur, "I have seen it."

"I was right then," said the other regretfully, adding. "Then believing as you do, Erroll, would you, should necessity arise, would you warn her, not from the man as he is, but from what he may, what he must be, for his future, for her future. I could not bear to die knowing that such a cross was in store for her bright and happy disposition. You have intimated there was no danger, no possibility. I hope so, I trust so; but will you do as I ask?"

"I will," he answered, his voice trembling.

"And now, Erroll, there is one more thing I want to speak of. I would refrain even now, did I not think it would be my last opportunity. It is about yourself — and another. I see that now clearer than I could ever otherwise have done. You remember the conversation we had

here soon after your hunting accident, you had found such a woman as you described. Is it not so?"

"Yes," St. Maur acknowledged, in an almost inaudible whisper, "You know it all."

"Erroll, the book that every one has been speaking of, and that is so much praised, I have it here," touching it upon his lap, "you know my sister Alice has been reading it to me. No one knows the story, but I can trace each heart-beat, every tear. Tell me, is it not yours, though it is a useless question, I know it; but I would rather hear you say so."

"Yes," it is mine," murmured the other in a low voice.

"And it tells the whole story," pursued Trevellyan. "Yes, I know the whole sad story, but the worst is passed, the clouds have gone by and the sunshine of your future will be more glorious than ever. Your life will be brighter, happier than you can think, or hope for. I would I could be with you, but that is past; I must not murmur," and as if looking into the future prophetically, he continued to speak. "Your hopes that have been stilled, your heart-aches will give place to more joyous and happier hours. Your fondest dreams will be more than realized. Proud, with a manly pride, great with a nobleness of spirit, you will rise even to the highest, and the one want of your life, the one longing of your soul will be filled with a woman's love as pure and sacred as your own," and then he paused, his voice failing from exhaustion.

“From the bottom of my heart I thank you, Audley, for the kind wishes that make you see so much good in and for me,” murmured St. Maur, in a subdued though loving voice. “But we can not speak more of this at present — hush! — Miss Carleton and Miss Egerton are coming.

The two approached, Lucille looking pale and worn from recent illness. It was the first time she had been out since that dreadful night, which clung around her recollections like a frightful dream, and the whole consequences of which she had not understood until receiving Trevellyan’s message.

The sweet and lovely face had somewhat lost its color, though the soft and gentle expression which naught could rob her of, was still there — that gentle expression, which upon a fair woman’s face makes her nearer akin to the angels than aught else beside; that attractive sweetness that compels those who approach, to offer homage in love and admiration. Not as unto a royal beauty, the belle of one or many seasons; not as unto the form of nature’s perfect moulding, but unto a higher, better object. An undefined emotion that testifies and teaches there is something beyond our common human nature, something which approaches that joy whereof man can not conceive, and it is this class of women. Alas, how few they are, whose names are not lauded at clubs, at mess dinners, or at race balls, and are only mentioned in that mystical respect which denotes the loyalty of men to one of God’s fairest creations — a beautiful and pure woman.

Not the hackneyed phrase of "virtuous," but where no thoughts, no schemes for conquests, or future aggrandizement have entered; but pure, whose contact with the world has left no regret, no stain. Where women's tongues have not been busy with supposed engagements, or recitations of flirtations; where the heart is pure before earth and heaven.

St. Maur retired as they came near, for both were shocked at Trevellyan's appearance. They would hardly have known him, and Lucille realized what he had done, what he had gone through for them, for her, and the pity and gratitude of her heart welled up in scarcely suppressed sobs, as kneeling by his side, she cried:

"I am so sorry, so distressed for you, and to think I should have brought you this sorrow and pain. How can I show you my gratitude, how can I ever thank—"

"Hush, hush! don't thank me," Trevellyan interrupted, trying to restrain her, "it was what any man would have done, and I a soldier refuse?— Oh, lady, do not let me think you are weeping for me, it adds to my suffering."

Bessie already had her arm around and her cheek pressed to Lucille's, as she whispered:

"My darling, I fear you are not strong enough; this is too much for you."

"Thank you for your timely help, Miss Egerton," exclaimed the invalid. "I am sure, to gratify me, Miss Carleton will not think of it again."

Lucille could not trust her voice, she only leant upon Bessie at her side, burying her face on her shoulder.

“Miss Carleton,” said Trevellyan, and his voice showed it was an effort to speak, being obliged to pause at intervals for rest and breath, “might I say something to you alone—about a subject that is very near and very dear to my heart?”

Bessie withdrew to where St. Maur stood, his face turned away.

“Miss Carleton,” Trevellyan continued, “you know that Erroll is very dear to me, and now that my own time is passing away, I have been thinking of his future, his happiness; it may be because my own is ended.”

“Oh! do not speak so,” she cried. “I trust you have life, if not the full measure of happiness before you; surely you are stronger than you think.”

“No, Miss Carleton, I can not deceive myself, but I would not distress you, only there is one great joy that might yet be given me; one happiness, knowing which, I could—I could die content, and, Miss Carleton, it rests with you.”

“Tell me,” she requested, “what I can do to cause you a moment’s pleasure. Only tell me what it is and you will see how willing, how glad I shall be.”

She was so eager, so anxious to serve him, to give him a moment’s ease of mind, or body—he who had risked so much for her.

“I would not have you, through me,” continued the

sufferer, laboriously, "do aught your free heart would not confirm. There are things I want to know, something I would ask you," and with difficulty and great effort, using the only hand over which he had any control, he partially held up the volume he had shown St. Maur.

"Have you read this?"

She saw the book and knew it instantly, as she replied, hesitatingly, her pale face now flushed:

"Yes."

"I thought so — I knew it." He spoke slowly, each sentence being fainter, harder drawn; adding:

"Do you know who the author is?"

"No, I can only think," she answered, lowly.

"On your reply — to me, to another," he went on, "hangs a weight of sorrow or happiness. Will you tell me — for it must be a blank to others — but do you understand it as I do? Do you see its passionate, hopeless appeal, and do you know, can you feel for whom it is?"

"Why do you ask me?" she murmured, "will it give you pleasure to hear, or is it for others?"

"Before my God, no one knows of this save myself," he uttered, solemnly; "but, as I have said, your answer bears grief or joy to me; to another, its pages tell their own story plainer than any words of mine could ever do. Will you tell me?"

Again she paused, the reply trembling on her lips. Never mind at whatever cost to her own feelings, she must not mislead him, but answer as her heart dictates.

"Yes," she said slowly and distinctly, with a sweet sadness in her voice, "I know for whom it was intended; to me as to you, it is undisguised."

"And now, Miss Carleton, one word more—and I will trouble you no longer. Is there hope—hope for love returned, for that which has been poured out so sacredly before you? I beg of you to answer me—to let me know this one thing—before I die." And he bent forward, waiting eagerly to catch the words. Only a slight sobbing broke the silence around. "Will you tell me—only this one thing?" he repeated, pleadingly.

Almost inaudibly, trembling, she faintly answered:

"Yes."

And then the stillness again; only the breezes rustling the branches, only the leaves falling sadly to the ground.

"Erroll."

"I am here," he said, hastening to Trevellyan's side. "Do you want me? are you worse?"

"No, not worse; that could scarcely be, for I have no pain; but I feel strangely, I can hardly tell you how."

"You have exerted yourself too much, let me carry you back to the house," demanded St. Maur.

"No, I would rather linger here, the sun feels warm and pleasant. What color is the western sky?"

"It is a beautiful gold and purple, and the sun will soon sink behind the hills. Do you feel better?" anxiously he enquired.

"Do I feel better?" Trevellyan repeated. "No, yes. I can hardly tell. I think, Erroll, the end is coming. Is my mother there?"

"She is on the terrace below, shall I call her?" replied St. Maur, brokenly, stroking his friend's hand, which was almost pulseless and cold.

"No, it is better not."

Bessie was supporting Lucille; both were weeping bitterly.

"Erroll, I must speak. My heart is too full. It will all come true, as I told you—Miss Carleton, would you place your hand in mine. Is it there?—I can not feel—Erroll, is yours there—you know I can not see—both—Miss Carleton, tell him *for my sake*—my last wish—is it so?"

She dared not look up, and yet, all this was for her, and she sobbed faintly:

"Yes."

He held their hands together for a moment, gently pressing them as far as his waning strength would allow, murmuring: "My God, I thank thee—" His head drooped, his spirit seemed fast failing.

"Erroll, it is growing dark, very dark. Where are you?"

"Here, Audley, here. Can you not feel my touch?"

"No, I can feel, see nothing—it is coming, coming now. Bessie, I can call you so for once, will you take my hand? Are you all there?" and then for a moment he seemed to wander, uttering words thick and incoherently, and then clear again.

“Erroll, will you tell her — tell Bessie?”

“Yes,” replied St. Maur, struggling for calmness, “I will tell her all.”

“Erroll, kiss me, just once. I have loved you very dearly.” And he stooped down and kissed the poor, charred, distorted face.

“Good-night — good-by. Better love — hath — no man — than this ——”

The life had passed away. Amid the fading crimson and gold, with the gentle breezes of that beautiful autumn evening, went out as true and brave a soul as ever winged its flight to the throne of grace — to the jasper gates and the streets of gold.

CHAPTER XXV.

LITTLE FAN'S WANDERINGS.

WHEN Fannie recovered consciousness from her fright, she was lying, weak and faint, on the hard pallet in the corner of her bare, cold room. A glass of water and plate containing dried toast and butter was placed on the floor near by, as also in close proximity, a vial of medicine.

How she arrived, or how long been there, were things past comprehension. She knew that she felt hungry, and in reaching out for the bread her arm trembled and shook so violently that it was with difficulty she obtained it. The water and crust seemed to give her strength, and she endeavored calmly to collect her wandering senses.

"Was it last night?" She shuddered at the recollection of the old man's bony grasp and horrible imprecation, then she remembered the cause which led to such consequences, and here she commenced to ponder and consider what could be done to avert the evil that threatened the kind, beautiful lady. There was an undefined calamity presaging her that might in some way be avoided if information could reach her of these men's machinations, and little Fan resolved that, happen what might, the lady should be told. But whom

could she trust to do it? Every body seemed to be her enemy. She was even afraid of Dan. They might extract her information and confine her afterward, so there would be no possibility of warning. No, she must do it herself, and from that moment she began to plot, and afterward to carry her plans into execution.

The little maid had no idea that instead of a day, she had been thus lying a week, in a low delirium. Mrs. Squint had exerted herself, and been extraordinarily active in her domestic's behalf, so far as administering the proper draughts and giving the simple nourishment required. Beyond this the child had to recover as best she might. Mrs. Squint's conscience was clear; she had performed *her* duty.

Fan was fast making up her mind what to do. She eat the whole of the spare allowance, and felt better and stronger. It does not take long for those who are accustomed to labor and privation to recuperate, and when the attorney's wife next made her appearance, the patient, though feeble, was much improved, and mending rapidly. Her mistress remarked her recovered appetite. Fan does not devour the whole of the food which disappears. On the contrary, she only consumes about one half, carefully concealing the remainder under her mattress. After a few days of such saving preparations, and when she made up her mind that her strength was sufficient for the undertaking contemplated, the small hoard of coins left from the donation to Slummer's Dick, were carefully tied in the corner of

her handkerchief, and with the provisions upon a larger scale, though similarly arranged, were laid aside ready for immediate use.

The window of Fan's room was just above a shed devoted to the purposes of a summer kitchen, and adjoining this was a high fence, so that the first night after completing her arrangements, feeling sufficiently vigorous, after the household had gone to bed, she arose, clad herself in her warmest garments, and, after listening intently for any further sounds, or signs of awakened life, gathered her parcels, and letting herself down upon the roof, from there to the fence and thence to the ground, she stole down the area, coming out upon the sidewalk on a clear, frosty, moonlight night. Quickly walking on she had progressed several squares when a regulation blue garb and felt helmet of a guardian of the law turned up in front. She felt somewhat alarmed at this. He might stop her; but it was too late for avoidance, and summing up her flagging courage, the policeman was somewhat surprised at the approaching queer looking little figure, and small weak voice that addressed him.

"Please, sir, can you tell me the way to Wentworth?" for she was impressed with the idea that Wentworth was the main objective point to be first gained.

"The way to Wentworth?" repeated the astounded man. "What Wentworth do you mean? East or West Wentworth—'igh or low Wentworth?"

"I don't know, sir, but a beautiful, kind lady lives there; Miss Carleton is her name," replied the small voice, pleadingly.

"I expect you mean where there was a fire, eh?" suggested the man in blue.

"Yes, sir; that's it. That's the place I mean."

"Why, my little woman," exclaimed the official, in astonishment, "it's a good hundred miles from here, and surely you'd never think to walk there, and this time o' night to start."

"No, sir, I'm going to ride part of the way," replied his eager questioner, "as far as I can, that is, as far as my money will pay for, and then I can walk the rest," and she grasped the hard-tied knot in the handkerchief tighter.

"What are you going there for?" inquired the officer, with a lynx eye to duty.

"I'm going to Miss Carleton's, sir. I know her, and there's something I want to tell her," murmured Fan, nervously and confused, afraid of detention, and not knowing whether to confide in the man, or not. Probably he wouldn't believe her, might treat her suspicions lightly, and then the lady would never hear, or know. No, she must not risk a divulgence.

"Well," answered the officer, after due reflection, pity getting the better of stern duty, "surely," he concluded, "there is no offense here greater than a fleeting servant—probably from a hard task-maker—to kind friends. He had a child at service himself, and

so, without more ado, the kindness of his heart predominated, and taking her hand, strode in the direction of one of the great depots, saying:

"I'll put you on the right road and see you comfortably fixed, any how. Wentworth is on the nor'western line, but you must be very careful to change cars at the Junction, or they'll keep ahead with you and you'll be lost for certain."

They walked in to the huge station, with its flaring, swinging gas jets, where engines were puffing, porters jostling, and even at this unusual hour, streams of passengers arriving and departing.

"Let us see how much you've got, my lass." The little maid had gathered confidence from his kind demeanor, and unhesitatingly untied the handkerchief, displaying her very limited wealth.

"Only seven and sixpence," he muttered, counting it over. "Well, we'll see what the fare is now," enquiring at the ticket window.

"Eight shillings and nine-pence to Wentworth, third class," was the short, sharp reply vouchsafed.

The policeman, returning, poured out Fan's little treasure into his own hand, pulling from his pocket what was wanting, and adding it to it. The child understood what he was doing, and exclaimed:

"Oh, please sir, don't give me your money, I can walk, after the fare gives out; indeed, indeed I can!"

"Never mind," he answered evasively, "I've done it to change my luck, so don't say another word, or maybe you'll spoil it."

Not exactly understanding this, further than she was enjoined to keep silence, for fear of working ill, she remained passive under his direction.

The ticket was bought, and with the protective influence of her burly cavalier, little Fan was snugly stowed away in the railway carriage, with many and strict warnings to mind "The Junction," or "she'd be lost certain," besides which, directing the Guard's attention to her, he departed, not without a touching exhibition of gratitude from the befriended child.

The bell rang, the engine screeched, and the train went on, first slowly through the suburbs, then faster and faster as it reached the outlying country, until fairly flying through the chilly night; now slowing, now stopping, then onward again into the unfathomable darkness. Little Fan for a long while peered out at the obscure hedges and fences as they flew by, and then she became drowsy and nodded, but remembered "the junction," and with eyes pressed open wider than ever, tried to discern the fleeting objects. Again she nodded, and again endeavored to keep all the more awake, but to no purpose, and, wearied and exhausted, fell into a profound slumber, unconsciously sliding from her seat to the floor, where she lay, huddled in her shawl, which had been wrapped tightly around her, fast asleep.

The cold gray of the morning light was just appearing as the train halted for change of passengers to Wentworth. The Guard looking casually in as passing

the door where little Fan lay, and observing the seat unoccupied, concluded she had escaped into the opposite train before his arrival, and giving the signal to start, jumped into his box, all unconscious of the sleeping child.

The sun was shining brightly as little Fan awoke, and the cars were entering a long covered platform. Doors were slamming, passengers getting in and out, and baggage being trundled away. A man was passing with a basket of oranges upon his arm, whom she ventured to address.

"Please, would you tell me, if we have reached the junction to Wentworth?"

"You've passed it, twenty miles back," was the unpropitious answer.

"Let me out, Guard, Guard, let me out," she screamed at the top of her voice, vainly tugging at the door, as that individual, attracted by the shrieks, hastened to the spot.

"Well, little Missus, what's the row," he inquired, unlocking the door.

"I've come past the place. Oh! what shall I do! What shall I do!" she cried in a burst of grief.

"Let's see your ticket!" He said as she handed it to him, "Why this is for Wentworth, you should have crossed over at the junction."

"I know sir, but I fell asleep, and no one told me," she replied hopelessly. "What shall I do?"

"Not my fault, Miss. The Guard behind me's to

blame, his route ends when we changed at the last stop. Can't do anything for you, must'nt delay the train," and waving his hand to start, sprang in as the train moved away, leaving Fan in the midst of a curious but not over sympathetic throng.

Her first impulse was to get rid of the rude, staring people around, and dashing a tear from her eye, clutched her shawl and bundle tighter, and passed out into a strange street. Arriving at a more quiet spot, she timidly enquired of an old woman the nearest way to the desired destination. But no information did she receive; the old woman, after inspecting her closely, declaring that "it was a pretty thing for the likes o' her to be asking for places as was'nt nowhere, she'd better go home, if she had a decent one, instead of runnin' about in such brazen bare-face style. It was a shame, and that she herself was too old to be fooled by the likes o' that, and to git along with her imperance."

Little Fan, disheartened after this tirade, sought the open fields, and finding a warm spot upon the sunny side of a haystack within a farm yard, sat down to cogitate and break her fast out of her store of provisions.

She was interrupted in her reflections and breakfast by a bevy of children, who from a distance descrying her retreat, flocked around, the elder plying her with all sorts of questions, whilst the younger stood dumbly staring. At last the farm woman came, and being of a kindly disposition scattered the children, and took her

into the house, setting warm milk and bread before her. The little wanderer's strength had been wonderfully taxed for one so lately arisen from a sick couch, and she was too feeble to proceed; seeing which, the woman gave her encouragement to linger, which was gladly availed of, Fan doing such household work as she was able, for compensation. After a good night's rest and directions as to the way, Fan re-commenced her journey, the farmer, as he was going to the next market town, giving her a lift for the first few miles and slipping a shilling into her hand at parting, drove off before she could either protest or thank him.

Plodding bravely on over the frosty ground the miles at first sped rapidly under little Fan's steps, and then more slowly as she became weary and footsore. Finally, as evening approached she neared what appeared a place of no inconsiderable importance, for upon its very threshold she was stopped, and accosted by one seeming in authority as to her destination, and the replies being unsatisfactory, the personage was about to carry her before the town officials, as a vagrant, but eluding his grasp she ran nimbly past, upon which—being a great awkward lout—he raised the hue and cry, and ere long Fan was pursued by a motley crew, gathering numbers at every step, the air resounding with their yells. This gave additional terror, and induced the child to flee the more swiftly; indeed she was outstripping her followers when, rushing blindly against the wheel of a passing wagon, would have fallen had not the driver

reaching out caught and lifted her into the vehicle, and soon they left the pursuers far in the rear.

She was too stunned to do more than lie patiently in the bottom of the cart, which contained two women besides the swarthy, ill-favored driver. When they had gotten well away from the town, the man glanced back at the recumbent figure of the child, whose forehead was cut and bleeding from violent contact with the running gear, and which one of the women was endeavoring to staunch with her apron.

“Has she any money?” queried the driver roughly.

In an instant, no resistance being offered, their hands were thrust in her skirt, bringing forth the solitary shilling that had been given her by the farmer. “Is that all?” quoth the man in a gruff, disappointed tone.

The women, afraid of displeasing him, searched once more but produced nothing further. He took the money, tried it between his teeth and slipped it into his waistcoat. Again they trotted on silently for more than an hour. Night had descended and the jolting of the vehicle jarred the child's bruised head, but her blistered feet were gaining rest, and they were moving in the right direction. At last halting in a grove, she was told to descend. There were one or two more queer looking wagons, fires were built, and people sitting and standing around them, smoking and talking. Fan knew sufficient to perceive it was a gipsy's camp, and her companions belonged to the company, for though there were few greetings, still they spoke together,

pointing at her and seemed to be consulting. They handed her some supper, helped themselves and crawling under their wagon covers, lay down to sleep. Fan was left to herself. Evidently they cared little if she remained, or departed, so obtaining a slight repose she noiselessly stole away from the bivouac, and with renewed vigor continued her course, starting in affright from every bush and brake which appeared, in the darkness, to conceal a wild beast or desperate looking highwayman. Coming to a wayside tavern she crept into an open stable and sought shelter under the bunches of straw. Just as her eyes commenced to droop, a great watch dog scenting her hiding place, barked ferociously, and would have attacked her, had she not climbed into the rack above. Presently the hostler appeared bearing a tin lantern, and searching for the cause of disturbance, let its rays fall full upon the figure of the child.

“Hullo! what are you doing here?” he cried, warding the brute off with a blow, and seizing her by the arm. “What’s the matter, can’t you answer?” he shouted, shaking her. “Well, then come along with me,” and suiting the action to the words, he half dragged, half led her into the house, where were a rude set of roysterers, playing cards and drinking; scarcely more than pausing to glance at her, and make some coarse remarks. The innkeeper, however, would not listen to her story, supposing she was a runaway and expecting a reward would be offered; and under this impression detained her several days longer, until see-

ing no advertisements and finding no one sought her, let her depart with a rough expletive for having caused so much trouble.

And now, Fan was fast nearing the end of her journey. She had crossed the railroad at the station lying nearest to Wentworth, struggling on bravely through the wet and cold. It was a stormy afternoon as she traversed the road, and when the sun went down, the winds moaned and whistled, and the rain and sleet dashed in her face, closer she wrapped her shawl around her, and breasted the rising storm. She had been told the town was not far off, and her heart beat high with hope and expectation. For an instant she stopped; there was a step behind her, but she could not pierce the darkness for more than a few yards, so crawling under the hedge as she had done more than once before, waited for the traveller to pass; but the person had descried the fluttering figure in front, and coming to the spot of her disappearance, peered narrowly around to discover the manner of so sudden a fleeting, and finding out her place of refuge, advanced, taking a sharp peep under her hood.

"Well, if this are'nt the little lady as give me the seven bob. I say, are'nt you Dan's sister?" queried the voice of Mr. Richard Fasting, alias Slummer's Dick.

It was a mutual recognition, and as Fan replied in the affirmative, prefaced that remark with the plea that she was "doing nothing to hurt anybody."

"Doing nothing to hurt anybody," grinned Richard

incredulously, "as if you could hurt anybody if you wanted, which I don't think likely, but what are you doin' here?"

"I am going to the next town," replied Fan, reluctantly, fearing further detention, and with her spirit now well nigh broken.

"That's just where I'm bound," avouched the other, "and as we're on the same track we might as well keep company. It's getting colder, so come on," and Richard reached out a hand to help her to rise, and held on to it as they walked.

"What brought you here?" he repeated when they were fairly started.

"I want to see a lady who was very kind to me once," replied she.

"Who may she be?" demanded he.

"Miss Carleton," she answered hesitatingly, determined to divulge no more.

"I know where she lives, it's just on the other side of the town from here. I'll show it to you," asserted Richard, looking curiously at her.

"Oh! I'm so glad," exclaimed Fan, receiving comfort from this assurance, and feeling no more doubts of her companion's good intentions. "Do you live here, Mr. Richard?" she added.

"No," said he curtly, "but I've been here before, though, I only come down on the last train, but I didn't see you aboard, or get out."

"No, I walked from away across the country, and

"I'm very tired," said she, feeling more friendly. And now the storm blew louder, and they could not hear each other well, so they silently pressed on. Richard looked searchingly and mysteriously at her again, but his observation was reassuring, and he continued to help her along, even lifting her over the very rough and muddy places. The night had grown darker and the storm fiercer, so that it was with difficulty they could face the blast, and Fan would undoubtedly have succumbed had it not been for her guide.

It was not a great while before in the distance they could see the glimmering lights of Wentworth, and now they are approaching "Lonedrear House," and will soon have left it behind, when—

"Hush! is not that some one coming?" exclaimed Richard—whose sharp eyes and ears are quicker to detect than Fan's—suddenly halting, motioning silence, and dragging her to one side. Scarcely had he done so than some one passed swiftly across the road in front, almost brushing against them—an old man with white hair and beard. Fan holds her breath in horrible suspense, she knows whom it is, there is no mistaking, it is the London pawnbroker.

Richard stoops down and holds her tightly, another figure glides by as if following the first in cautious pursuit. They waited a little longer, when Richard whispered her to keep straight on, she cannot lose her course, the lights will direct her, and he will soon overtake her, and then he sprang away in the darkness.

She would have called aloud after him, but terrified out of her senses and left alone, she stood trembling for a moment and then dashed madly forward. A carrier's cart rattled at a headlong pace by her, but she did not heed it, and such speed did she maintain that before fully getting over her fright she was in the midst of the town. Richard had not caught up, and where was she to go? The fire shone cheerfully through the panes of the "Great George," but she dared not seek admission — they might treat her as at the last taven. Richard had said the house she sought was on the further side of the village, and so she wandered on flagging, foot-sore, and of a fast sinking heart. She leant against a stone pillar for rest. It was the entrance of the church yard, beyond was the open portal which promised shelter from the wind and rain. She entered, the surroundings had no terror for her, it was not the dead, but the living that she feared, and wearily dragging her tired limbs within the covered way, she sank down upon the wide stone threshold faint, sick, and exhausted, and was soon lost in a feverish, troubled slumber.

CHAPTER XXVI.

FOLLOWED—DISCOVERED.

THE Pawnbroker was as usual, in his great barn-like place, in close proximity to the rusty stove, which yielded a slight warmth around its immediate vicinity, leaving the nether corners and recesses of the apartment in habitual gloom and dampness. A small taper burned upon a rickety table at his elbow, and like the stove, only shed its influence over a coequal radius.

It had been a busy day for him. Ships were arriving, sailors landing and pawning their few articles of value for ready money. Together with Daniel, he has been continually occupied taking in the various pledges, much time being consumed in adjusting their nominal trading value. Daniel has departed to the "Varieties," leaving the Jew alone, who did not appear to take that keen interest in his money grasping which had been his wont. He looked more aged, the face more wrinkled and haggard, his eye feverish, and a strong smell of brandy pervaded the close atmosphere. His mind seems to be clutching in the future; it may be there is better and larger game in view.

"Strange," he muttered, "I have heard nothing of Squint; very strange." As thus soliloquizing, there was a rap on the door, and he hobbles forward in his

loose carpet-slippers to attend the summons, cautiously opening the aperture as far as the chain would allow.

"Who 's that?" he asked.

"Me," said the well-known, high-pitched voice of Mr. Squint. "Hurry up and let me in, don't keep a man standing here freezing in the cold."

The chain was immediately unfastened, permitting him to enter, and the entrance closed again with the same precaution.

"Why the devil don't you keep more fire?" continued the attorney, hovering over the stove and rubbing his hands, adding, "and a little more light would make your infernal hole more bearable."

Squint was rather savage in his tone, from which the other knew him too well to argue that things were going smoothly with the lawyer.

"Why haven't you been here before?" commenced the Jew, irately; but quickly perceiving it was an ill time to bring accusations, broke off with an eager enquiry of:

"What news, what news? Have you seen him?"

"News? That miserable Proctor, I'd give something pretty to catch him, just once. I'd wring his infernal pride out of him."

"What did he say?"

"Nothing; nothing. Treated the matter very lightly. Got on his high tune: "really couldn't see it was any business of his at all," and some such stuff. I'll make him see though, and that before long."

"Did he say what steps he would take?" asked the Jew, anxiously.

"No, I tell you. He said nothing," repeated the attorney, testily, "and I don't see exactly what we are to do."

"Won't he consult with the young lady?" further questioned the Pawnbroker.

"No, he won't even do that. Says I must see her myself," mused Mr. Squint.

"Well, we must bring suit," suggested the other, complacently. "That is the best and safest course. You know I need not appear, you are the one to 'defend the widow and the fatherless;' ha, ha," he laughed at the idea.

"Bring suit, you fool; I told you that was our last resource, and you must not suppose you will be kept so much in the background either; but compromise, man, compromise first, and, if absolutely necessary, the suit afterward—which I have my doubts about," faltered the lawyer. "I don't want it sifted if it can be avoided; a good round sum in cash, that will satisfy us at present, and afterwards we can trouble them a good deal—and have another compromise, maybe a third; but it won't do to strike against that lynx-eyed Proctor, he had the brass and impudence to intimate he saw through the whole thing; but it's none of his business *yet*. I say, Moses," he exclaimed, brusquely sniffing the air, "there's a strong smell of brandy about here," and he looked at the Jew suspiciously.

"Brandy, how could I buy brandy?" replied Moses, gruffly; "but let's get to our business, and see what can, and is to be done."

"My friend," declared the attorney, solemnly placing his hand on his shoulder, "there is brandy in this room, and by the smell, good brandy; come now, I confess I would never have suspected you. Don't let us start out trying to deceive each other; that liquor's here and I want some of it. It clears my brain and gives me fresher, newer ideas, so come, let's have it."

"But I tell you I haven't any," persisted the other, in no amiable mood. "I haven't taken a drop, except the beer at the corner with you, for these twenty years."

"That may all be very true, Moses, but I have observed a change in your appearance in the last few months, and I can guess now pretty well how it originated and progressed; so let's have the bottle, or I will not say another word, and there are occurrences which have taken place since I last saw you and which have been the means of my not coming here before, that you would like and must hear of, for they may be fraught with the most serious consequences for both of us."

"Curse you and your infernal obstinacy," grumbled the Jew, shuffling to one of the small boxes which lined the walls, and unlocking it, produced a large, black flask of brandy which, placing upon the table with an angry thump, "there take it," he shouted, not concealing his rage, "and be d—d to you!"

“Ah, ha, my friend, so I was right; but where are the glasses? — *glass*, I should say, for I don't suppose you want any. But let's have two; where the ewe is, the lamb's not far off, and so where the liquor is, the glasses are near; so come, no fooling, but get them,” demanded Mr. Squint, concluding.

“Get them yourself,” snarled the other, “you seem to know so much about it.”

“Well, I'll look. Why, here they are, under the table; but it's only one, and it's not dry either. That's good, very good. This will do, I don't suppose you want any,” mixing some of the spirits with a little hot water on the stove. “Ah! it's excellent, excellent,” he continued, smacking his lips and setting the tumbler down.

“Well, suppose you tell me of the occurrences you alluded to, now that you have your liquor,” said the Pawnbroker, testily.

“Got it? yes; but don't raise your hopes,” — for the other was about to withdraw the flask, which movement the attorney quickly interrupted — “yes, I've got it, and intend to keep it and have more. I have to inform you, to begin with, our maid, little Fan, whom you frightened out of her wits, and I'm not surprised,” continued the lawyer, the liquor beginning to have a pleasant effect, and inspecting the other. “I should have been scared myself had I not seen you in your true garb before. You're not an object to infuse confidence — well, there — there — don't interrupt me — the child's gone.”

"Gone! where?" cried Moses, starting up.

"That is just what I don't know," replied Squint, "although I've enquired everywhere; but I have come to the conclusion," he kept on, "that if there was any harm to come of it, we would have heard of it ere this, so I am not so worried as at first; and then there is another reason why we must hurry this affair up, and that is, there's no peace at my house so long as this Madame Carleton and the squalling child are there, and if we don't take care she'll let the whole thing out. It's as much as I can do to keep her tongue quiet for five consecutive minutes, so I've decided you must go down and see this young lady as quickly as possible."

"*You've* decided," snarled the Jew. "I suppose you have decided for me to do everything, but I'm not particularly anxious to jeopardize my bodily welfare."

"I know that very well," rejoined the lawyer, "but I don't ask you to do anything of the kind. You have met Miss Carleton, you know her, you have done her a small favor," he said, with contemptuous derision; adding, satirically: "What I want you to do, is to see, talk to, and advise her in your kind, disinterested way. If you don't accomplish anything, you will at least find out how things lie, and see what Proctor's going to do. It's all fudge, what he said to me. If I only knew how to do it," he continued, thoughtfully. "I'll tell you what, I'd offer him a share. I don't believe he's a bit above it, only I can't trust him, that's all."

"Trust *him*? How many do you want to take into

your confidence?" screamed the other, thoroughly aroused. "If you go on this way, I'll have nothing more to do with it. I'll have nothing more to do with you. I won't be seen with you! you shan't come here!" he shouted, louder. "If you want transportation, get it and be cursed to you, but you shan't drag me down with you. I won't run any such risks. Trust the enemy himself — trust the arch fiend at once, and put yourself safely in his claws."

"Not quite so fast, my friend — not so fast," exclaimed the lawyer, raising his hand deprecatingly, "I haven't said I intended trusting him. I only remarked, I wished I knew him, and as for the matter of a chance 'ticket of leave,' I have no more desire for it than you, though probably you know more about such things, eh?" giving the other a penetrating glance upon general principles and the vague supposition that there was enough somewhere concealed in this man's life to warrant such an ending.

"What do you mean, talking to me in such a manner?" breathed the Jew, heavily. "What do I know about transportation, more than you? You are drunk!" And his whole body seemed to tremble with excitement or fear, and hastily seizing the single tumbler, quickly drank off its contents.

"Where's the glass?" said the attorney, not perceiving the hasty action of his companion, and searching for the liquor. "You sly dog, you've got it, have you, and you have been trying to deceive your old

friend Squint? Oh! fie, fie! ain't you ashamed of yourself? and you *do drink!* You pious old fraud—you miserable sinner!”

“No, I don't drink; but I felt a little cold just then, and don't like to be spoken to in that way, either,” whined the old man.

“Well, I won't do so again; but you do appear a little nervous,” observed Squint. “It won't do to show it to others though, they might suspect there was something wrong in your antecedents; but to me who know you so well, why it don't matter; so don't get cross, here's luck to you; it's a pity we hadn't two glasses, we might toss a health and luck to both of us together. However, here goes,” and he drank it off. “And now to the subject. You will have to see the lady.”

“Well, go on. I have to see her soon about the — the — no matter what, go on,” repeated Moses.

“I know, the diamonds. Ha! ha! ha!” laughed the lawyer, “but that was a clever trick. How well you did it. I don't suppose she'll ever see them again. Oh, no; you are too sharp for that, my dear.”

“Never mind that,” grinned the Jew, in better spirits from his libation, “what do you propose my doing?”

“I will tell you,” said the attorney, leaning over the table confidentially. “Go down there as soon as you can. Go to-morrow, before Proctor gets there; the cunning fox, he won't delay. Tell her these things have come to your knowledge surreptitiously; tell her

a tale of sorrow and misfortune; harp on the connection, the relationship—do anything to gain a point, to excite her sympathies, and then we will have a fair field to work on.”

“Well, I will go down to-morrow and see what I can do,” decided Moses; but Daniel appearing at this moment, interrupted further conversation. As the boy was slinking past the attorney’s position, that worthy espied and accosted him with,

“Ah! Dan’l, is that you, and how was the performance to-night?”

“’Bout the same,” replied the lad. “Allers the same; I see no difference now.”

“Was the French lady there?”

“Yes sir.”

“And what was she doing, Dan?”

“She were a skylarking with a most everybody, and they say as how she’s a goin’ to dance some night herself. She makes a big fuss cause Stalker don’t keep her drink, some sort o’ a French mixture, though he says he’ll get some for her.”

“That will do, Dan,” said the lawyer, with a wave of the hand, turning to his companion. “You see how it is, she’ll break the whole thing up, if we are not quick and careful. She’s a French hussy, with not a grain of sense, and we had better end this matter as soon as possible, before standing a trial. If we had a better Principal, there’s no telling what we couldn’t achieve; and another thing, I’m tired of this woman and

squalling brat in my house, there's no peace with them. She's always drinking infernal absinthe, and every night goes to the Varieties, though Rosa's tried every means to keep her away, and she and 'Minny' are continually having a row, until I believe the French nurse begins to suspect something, and that would jeopardize our case." And so irritably draining the last of the flask and donning his cloak, Squint sallied out into the cold, to home, to quarrel, to bed.

Having been kept well posted, through Rosa's correspondence with Dolly, of events and movements at Wentworth, the Jew, upon the following day, leaving Dan'l in strict charge, took an early departure for the country, not, however, without unconsciously subjecting himself to the watchful gaze of Mr. Richard Fasting, formerly of "Slummer's." That youth had continued, as Dan'l had remarked, to hang around the close vicinity of the shop, with an occasional peep in, and learning from such signs of preparation as he could espy from the outside, that the pawnbroker was about to indulge in one of his migratory trips, no sooner had Moses started out than Richard was keeping at a sure but respectable distance behind. Surmising from former inquiries of Dan'l, and his own cogitations, there was a hidden place of treasure to visit, he concluded that he might obtain revenge and enrich himself at the same time, and had waited patiently for such an occasion as this, being fully prepared to take advantage of it, and when dogging his footsteps discovered the Jew's

destination, hastily expended his last shilling in a ticket upon the same train, and for the same place, carefully keeping out of the other's sight.

Moses Mosler presented a more cleanly, better exterior than usual. He was dressed respectably, travelled respectably, and argued to himself that he had a respectable object in view, carrying a neat, taut satchel, though it contained no change of apparel, this being a matter that seldom, if ever, troubled him, but stowed securely within its recesses was a good stone jug of brandy, excellent brandy, the same of the night before, and which was obtained of his sailor friends cheap, very cheap, by reason of a slightly defective title.

The morning was raw and cloudy, and ere he had gone many miles, turned into a driving sleet, giving the whole landscape a cold and cheerless aspect. In the carriage, which he occupied alone, there was an excellent opportunity of applying to the satchel, and from thence to the jug, for comfort within, and against the dreariness without. These advantages were not allowed to pass by unheeded, but were taken full and due advantage of, and his libations were frequent and not far between.

Upon coming to the Wentworth station, he took the lumbering vehicle denominated a stage, for this last portion of the journey, and it was here that Richard, not having either the wherewithal, or a separate and less conspicuous means of conveyance, was obliged to follow the pursuit on foot, accidentally overtaking and joining company with little Fan.

Arriving at the Great George, the pawnbroker entered, observing closely the surroundings with a marked curiosity.

The landlord received him alone, as it was not yet the usual hour for his customary visitants of the village sexton and confrères.

Depositing his securely-fastened portmanteau, the Jew gave directions for the preparation of a night's lodgings, giving notice of his intention to visit Mr. Leslie at the Rectory, and of his return.

The night had closed in dark and stormy, the rain that had been drizzling all day, now accompanied by the wind, blew in gusts fierce and loud, rattling the tiles and weather vanes as though possessed.

In all this storm the Jew made his appearance at the Rectory door; the servant looked at him suspiciously, keeping him standing until she had informed the master, who was at the moment in deep converse with Rufus Applegarth in his study.

"Please sir, there is a man who desires to see Miss Carleton, and I thought it better to let you know."

"I will see him myself," said the Rector, rising and proceeding to the entrance.

"Do you wish to see Miss Carleton?" he continued, inspecting the visitor with anything but a favorable eye.

"The Rev. Mr. Leslie, I presume," said the Jew, bowing low, displaying his dripping figure, "I have business with Miss Carleton, if it is possible to see her."

"I doubt whether she is sufficiently recovered as yet, and it is much better that she should have no cause of agitation. Could not I do as well?" asked the minister.

"You are very kind," replied he, "but my business is with her alone. Might I request you to ask whether she will grant me an interview."

"Sit here until I can give you a more definite answer," said the Rector, pointing to a hall chair, and going back to consult Applegarth as to the expediency and propriety of letting Miss Carleton see him.

"I wish you would look at this person," he went on to the Surgeon, "he wishes to see Lucille, and I do not know either from his appearance or condition, that it is advisable; let me know what you think."

"Certainly I will," answered the other, and went out to speak to the man, starting slightly back, at immediately recognizing his acquaintance of the fracas."

"Ah, it's you," he exclaimed, advancing, "a stormy night to be out."

The Jew recoiled involuntarily from the sudden apparition of the Surgeon. He would have quickly withdrawn into the night, so great was his consternation—even making an effort to reach the entrance—then partially recovering his usual calm, though still wavering in resolution of hasty retreat, replied, making a low obeisance, and remaining bent for the better purpose of concealing his features.

"My sight is not so good as yours, sir, and you will

excuse me. The weather is hard for an old man like me, and I would not have come out was I not anxious to have speech of a lady in the house, but I understand she is not sufficiently recovered as yet to undergo the fatigue of an interview, and so I will not disturb the household further, but can call another time," and made in the direction of the door.

"Did you come all the way from London?" demanded the Surgeon, interrupting his movement.

"All the way, sir; but I will trouble you no further," and he endeavored to pass.

"You are not going to venture far upon such a night as this?" questioned Applegarth, still standing in the way, and viewing him with an intense look of interest.

"Oh! no sir! only to the 'Great George,' where I have already engaged a room."

"Are you not afraid of missing your way? If you desire I will accompany and assist you."

"Oh, no sir; it would cause a useless inconvenience. I know the path, that is, I came along it, and can find my way back, 'tis but a short distance;" and he seemed to wait for the other to make way for him.

"Have you ever been to Wentworth before?" demanded the Surgeon, with strange, repressed excitement.

"No, I have never been to this part of the country before—not to my knowledge—not to my knowledge, but business such as mine often takes us in out of the way places," he answered, drawing his écloak around him, and with averted eyes.

"What became of the young man who assaulted and robbed you? Perhaps you have forgotten our meeting upon that occasion, as you seem to fail to recognize me?"

"There were so many about, sir, that I failed to notice any in particular, but he was given a term, sir, a good term, the rascal, though by some influences the charge was lessened and his sentence repealed. You recollect it, sir? you must have an excellent memory."

"Yes, I have an exceedingly good memory; might I ask if you have the same?"

"Pretty good, sir, pretty good; but I must be going," taking a step forward.

"One moment," observed the Surgeon, intercepting him; "I desire to ask a question of you."

"With pleasure, sir, with pleasure," rejoined the pawnbroker, seeing that escape was futile, and with an unaccountable feeling of uneasiness.

"You say yours is a business that leads you in strange places," continued Applegarth, his voice shaking inexplicably. "Can you tell me—and the reason why I ask is, that he belonged to your race—if you ever knew of, or met a man named Mathew Matherton?"

The Jew started visibly, his eyes rolled wildly for a moment. He had not heard that name spoken for thirty years. Shooting a glance of keen fear at the other, he regained his self-possession, and replied, stroking his beard in an attitude of reflection:

"No, I never knew of, or met such a man."

"You are sure," demanded the other, his eyes gleaming with a nervous brilliancy.

"Yes, I am sure," replied the pawnbroker, "but may I inquire, why do you ask? I might possibly come across such a person in the future."

"No, if you have not, you never will," said he, gloomily, allowing him to pass out.

Applegarth stood silently brooding for a moment, then hastily seizing his hat and coat, told the Rector of the man's departure, and that he himself would probably not return, and noiselessly opening the door, followed the diminishing figure out into the storm.

He knew the path well; in his many visits of charity and wandering marches he had become familiar with the whole country thereabouts, scarce a cross-cut or by-road he did not know.

The atmosphere was blinding with the sleet and driving rain. He could hardly see a rood before him, but ere long, becoming accustomed to the blackness, he could indistinctly see the form of the Jew moving in front. The latter had been shielding his head and face with the great collar of his cloak, and when the portal behind him closed, had neither observed its light or the noise, and the wind drowned all other sounds. The Jew kept on to the Rectory stile; then, wheeling to glance about as well as the darkness permitted, suddenly turned sharp to the right. The Surgeon was still inside the Parsonage paling, and, though within a few paces of the other, was totally obscured from view.

As he saw the Jew deviate from the direction of the village, he was about to step forward and set him aright, but as without hesitation he had swerved from the course, and with an apparent familiarity, surely he must know there was a path this way and where it led. But why should he take it?

Keeping along close to the fence, down the ravine, across the swinging bridge, over the turbid brook, up the steep declivity on the other side, still the one unconsciously led and the other followed. At last, coming to the public highway, near to Lonedrear House, the Jew halted an instant, looking uneasily around, as before. His pursuer stooped close to the ground, though the darkness was sufficient pall, and who could hear aught in that fierce blast, save the creaking of the trees and the whistling of the wind? Cautiously the old man crossed the road, almost touching the shrinking, cowering forms of Richard and Little Fan. Hugging the brick wall of the garden, he steadily glided forward.

The Surgeon's nerves were strung to the highest pitch. An unaccountable feeling urged him to follow, step by step, until the other came to a wooden gate in the wall. Unfastening this by the withdrawal of an iron spike, he passed in.

Applegarth waited a moment to be sure he had advanced far enough, and then proceeded in the same manner. Passing around the house, he came to a cellar opening, through which the Jew had disappeared. Descending as rapidly as possible, he paused for further

results. It was comparatively quiet here. The raging of the elements could not be heard so plainly. Commencing to grope forward, he ran against an obstacle.

"Ha! what's that?" exclaimed the Jew. "What's that?" he cried, hoarsely, but no reply came. "Nothing but the rats," he muttered; "they haven't left the place yet. Zounds, I wouldn't live here, even were I a rat. I'll strike a light. Nobody's likely to be out to-night, and if they are, they will take it for the ghosts. Ha! ha! the ghosts!" stopping suddenly, as the walls re-echoed the laugh.

"It's dull work," he continued. "I'll have a light, though; and where's my flask?" feeling for this last. "It's safe; and now for the matches."

The Surgeon felt for a place of shelter, which offered itself behind an old water-butt. The matches were damp and the old man's hands wet, so it was with difficulty one could be gotten to burn. Applying this to a small lantern, taken from his pocket, and which, igniting, he rested it on the ground.

"Nobody here," he murmured, peering about. Just then a rat ran over his foot, probably frightened and blinded by the unusual light.

"Curse the vermin," he cried; "curse the thing. Why, it almost frightened me—frightened *me*! Ha! ha! I'm not so easily scared, am I, old fellow, eh?" This last being addressed to an untouched and well-filled flask, which he produced and took a long draught from.

"That will cheer me," he kept on, smacking his lips, "and now to work. I wonder who that man can be?" reflectingly, at the remembrance of the Surgeon. Bah! it makes my blood run cold to think of him. This is the third time I have come across his devil's face, bah!" and he shook as with a chill. "What makes me feel so strange in his presence? What unaccountable dread is this that comes over me? Ha! there are ways of getting rid of spectres. We'll think over it. I must do something, or his face will torture the life out of me—the life that is so precious now, when wealth and power are just opening to my view. But I must not think of him; it unnerves me;" and, with shaking hand, he proceeded with the lantern, shedding its rays before, and by contrast leaving his track behind cast in greater gloom. From the cellar he proceeded to the passage way, from the passage to the stair above, ascending into the chamber, soliloquizing as he went.

"All is safe. No one has been here. But it never could be found. If the house burns down, it is safe. Chimneys always stand. Yes, the safest place I could find—safer than London. I wouldn't trust them there—too many thieves. Yes, this is the safest place. Nobody ever comes here; not likely they ever will. People don't visit haunted houses, ha! ha! I'm a ghost! Good! good!" and he ended in a hideous laugh, whose echo again startled him and induced silence. Stealthily, surely, he was followed, rise by rise, step by step, until finally entering what had formerly

been the chief bed-room, he sat the light upon the hearth, and, stooping down, thrust his body up the chimney, leaving nothing but his feet visible, and in a moment reappeared, holding in his hand a strong brass box of goodly dimensions. Placing this beside the lamp, and fitting a key, he unlocked it. Throwing the full rays of the light within the casket, it displayed a dazzling, almost regal sight.

There were diamonds, rubies, emeralds—all kinds of precious stones—neatly deposited in layers upon dark velvet linings—some small, some large, some of great value, others of less, and some in their settings—but, with all their lustre, they shone with no more brilliancy than the Jew's eyes, as greedily and avariciously, he gazed at them.

“Ah, my pretty things,” he murmured, running his fingers over them, “you are all safe, all safe, better than in the Bank of England, better than in my own hands. Ah, here is the stone of stones!” picking up a large emerald and holding it to the glare. “You are worth,” balancing it between his fingers, “at least a thousand pounds.” Then, taking up a diamond, “and you two thousand. I could get that for either of you any day, but I don't want it. Not yet, not yet. You are better than money. Gold runs away, but jewels never, never. And soon I will have enough. Then for the gold and the winning cards. I have my theory—it *must* win. I've worked it out now for twenty years, and there can be no mistake, no failure. But, hist! it's

getting late. I must hasten. My absence is too prolonged." And taking from his bosom more jewels that he had brought, he placed them beside the others. Giving the lid a slam, the spring lock closed, and he replaced it up the chimney upon a side jamb. Pausing for a moment, as if contemplating the surroundings,

"This is the room he slept in, the old miser. I was entitled to his money, but he wouldn't give it. I paid him back though, the hypocrite," and with this last reflection he applied himself to the flask, extinguished the light, and retraced his steps.

Applegarth had been standing just without, intently surveying every action, his veins swelling with madness almost to bursting, his brain on fire.

"At last, at last," he murmured, "it has come at last," and quickly hastened in the trail of the other.

When the Jew and his pursuer passed Richard, the latter separated from little Fan in a precipitous manner, which left her to journey alone, and lost no time in reconnoitering the situation. Perceiving the light in the window above, he climbed a tree near by whose limbs approached the casement, and taking a hazardous position upon one of them, he could observe with distinction the interior, and though not aware of its full value, beheld the treasure with covetous and longing eyes, and no sooner had the two withdrawn and the noise from a cart which rattled by died away in the distance, than descending from his perch and gaining access, secured the casket from its place of concealment,

and forgetting his promise to catch up with Fan, indeed, oblivious to all else save visions of the contents of his capture, even taking his coat off to wrap around it for protection and fear of identification, made his way as rapidly as circumstances permitted to London, and was soon in the company of his fair champion of the "Varieties"—Rosa Spiggott.

CHAPTER XXVII.

PARRICIDE.

AS Richard, carrying the treasure of jewels, sped Londonward, Moses, the Jew, proceeded with uneven step and hard struggles against the elements to the Great George Inn, followed close, tracked as like a blood-hound, by the creeping figure of Applegarth.

There was no change in the cosy bar. The same people were there in their usual places, albeit Freeman Tasker's love-longings and aspirations had wilted into deep and remorseful sighs, intended for the hearing of the fair Dolly alone, for the sexton had come to know that his was a vain pursuit, the carrier far outstripping him, and it was well known what smiling favors he met.

The sexton, upon this occasion, and at this particular moment, was heaving forth volcanos of regret and hopelessness. The saddler was beholding with pity, whilst the landlord was content in the midst of huge columns of tobacco smoke, when the pawnbroker made his reappearance.

"Good night to you," exclaimed that individual, "though a very bad one it is."

"That it is," spoke Spiggott, as they made room for him at the hearth, "'tis miserable weather to be out. Are you just from the Rectory?"

"Yes, I left there but now."

"'Tis strange Mr. Leslie did not make you remain."

"I preferred to return; the way is easily found."

"Surely you could not have become so wet in that short distance," said the landlord, looking askant at his dripping garments.

"A moment's exposure would soak one through now," answered Moses, and suddenly changing the subject, "Have you any good food, warm and nourishing?"

"Plenty have we, if you desire it," replied the host, motioning to Dolly, who was sitting behind the counter knitting, to have the order carried out.

"And get me a brandy punch, hot, for my body is chill and my bones ache," declared the Jew.

"I wonder what keeps Jerry so late?" said Toner, the saddler, after a pause.

"I saw him," replied Tasker, "this evening as he went to the railway in his covered cart, a slick looking trap it is too," reluctantly giving the necessary praise due his rival, with a keen insight into the advantage of keeping upon the good side of the family, even though his own prospects were ruthlessly dashed aside.

"Jerry is doing well," said Spiggott, approvingly. "He's made a good business of it. I doubt not but that he has put something aside even now, but for my part, though wishing no harm to his trade, I would there were no such things as railroads and we had the good old stage line back."

"So do I," flourished the sexton, bound to agree with the landlord. "People whip into Wentworth and out again now as if it were nothing. I remember when there would be at least a half dozen passengers laying over here for the night; those were the Great George's best days."

"Yes," replied the landlord mournfully, "I remember those times myself, but the business is all gone, all broken up; if travellers dine or sup, it seems as much as one can expect, but here's Jerry now," and the carrier came forward, removing a great oilskin, that hung loosely about his shoulders.

"Why Jerry, you are late," said the saddler.

"Yes," replied he, giving his hat a shake that sent the damp off in a small shower. "I had to wait for some dispatches for Miss Lucille at the Rectory, her relations on their way from abroad, and Mr. Proctor coming down I believe, forwarded letters."

The Jew pricked up his ears.

"Mr. Proctor coming down, eh! did you say?"

The carrier looked at the newly arrived guest, answering:

"Yes, that's what the message said. Mebbe you know him?"

"I've heard of him," returned Moses, resuming sipping his hot brandy. "I just came from the Rectory. I took the path, and you were on the road, that is the way we missed."

"I suppose," said Hardin, but he was more silent this evening than usual, suddenly breaking out:

"It's about again to-night."

Those around, with the exception of the pawnbroker knew what "it" meant, perfectly well, so after an intervening silence for reflection, the saddler questioned:

"Did you see it?"

"Yes, as I drove by I saw the light as plain as you, it was movin' about the same as ever."

The Jew was listening eagerly, sharply he turned upon them.

"What are you all talking about?"

"About some 'at he saw to-night," said the worker in leather.

"*What* did you see?" queried he again, interrogating Hardin acrimoniously.

"I saw a light in Lonedrear House."

"You mean the haunted house by the roadside?" returned the guest, seemingly indifferent.

"How did you know it was haunted?" exclaimed the landlord, gazing unsatisfactorily at him.

"Oh! some one told me, perhaps at the Rectory; I've heard of these things before, we have such houses in London."

"Did you stop," said Spiggott, addressing the carrier.

"Not I," returned he. "I've no desire to form the acquaintance of goblins. I whipped up pretty fast, you may depend." A laugh being indulged in by this speech at his expense.

"We have such things in London," declared the pawnbroker, seriously, "there's no accounting for them, and those who laugh or disbelieve have ill luck, or some terrible calamity; for my own part I have always thoroughly believed in them. The air is peopled with the souls of the departed. Why shouldn't it be? Can any one prove to the contrary? No. Can we have our own thoughts, our own experiences? Yes."

All attention was now centered upon the expounder of spiritualism who was saying what their superstitions made a willing creed of.

"I have had experiences myself," kept on Moses. "I remember a man who scoffed at such things; that very night something appeared to him; he could scarcely discern its shape for fright, but the apparition said he should remember it, and a red hot hand grasped his; he swooned, and when aroused, there was the distinct mark of the five finger points scorched into his arm, and it remained there until he died, when, with his latest breath, it disappeared."

There was a deathlike silence, each one of his listeners caring not to break it first, and taking advantage of this he continued:

"Again, I knew a beautiful lady, so beautiful as to be the envy of all, who laughed gayly, saying she had no fear, not she — and defied the invisible powers to do their worst; time elapsed, she had forgotten the silly speech, the vain challenge, and was sitting alone at night; the door of the chamber opened quietly, she tried

to close it, but in vain; a chair moved to her side, she attempted to remove it but couldn't, a kiss was implanted upon each cheek, her beauty vanished, her face became old and shriveled, her health wasted and she died shortly afterward."

Another solemn stillness, which Dolly broke announcing the guest's supper prepared, and he followed her, chuckling to himself at the hypocritical device taken, as a further means of securing his treasure from discovery.

During this time Applegarth, through the unshuttered casement, had kept up a constant surveillance from the outside, not caring for the wild fury of the storm and cold; his heart was chilled, but his brain on fire, until, observing the Jew's departure for his supper, he turned away murmuring: "Just a year and it has come. I will battle against it no longer, it must be," and hurrying to a side entrance, found it unlocked. There was no light upon that side, and he crawled softly along, ascending the hall stairway he stepped into a chamber. It was the same room the landlord had shown him upon his first arrival; the high bedstead, the ancient wainscoting, the same great oaken press, the panelled door opposite, leading out upon a hanging balcony—these could barely be seen in the gloom, but as if by instinct he knew they were there. A satchel lay upon the table; he was right, this was the room to be occupied. Stealing to the press and turning the wooden button that served as fastening, he secreted himself within it.

Time passed, seemingly an age, moments were as eternity, there crouched in his hiding place, he had but one purpose, one aim; in regard to all else his mind was a perfect blank. Ere long he heard the innkeeper escorting the guest to his chamber; heard his words of precaution, "take care o' that step, this way," as they passed over the threshold. A ray of light penetrated his place of concealment, and peering through this he could see and hear them plainly.

"Is there anything you wish?" asked Spiggott, setting the candle down.

"Yes, a tumbler and water."

"Here they are," said the host, placing them from a side stand upon the centre table.

"That will do," rejoined the pawnbroker, and the innkeeper bidding "good night," withdrew.

Locking the door carefully after him, the Jew stooped down to inspect the fastening, and as he examined the apartment, fell into his old habit of soliloquizing aloud, muttering:

"This is the same, I remember it well. Why the devil did that blundering idiot of an innkeeper put me into it! However, I do not care. Let's have some spirits—a little more, just a drop, and then—a little more," at this he chuckled hoarsely, drawing the jug from the satchel, "why you are only half gone," balancing its contents critically. "Plenty for to-night though, plenty," and he helped himself liberally.

"My! how the wind does blow," he kept on. "It's

cold, too, but I'll soon be warm enough," casting his glance upon the bottle. "I wonder who that man at the Rectory is. I don't like him. His questioning me so closely, too. I'll be even with him yet, curse his face, he shan't come near me any more, and my name too, but 'tis strange, strange, they must have been telling him of — of — the little trouble I had here, but bah; nobody knows me now. How long has that been. I should think about thirty years ago, and at this season too; why I do believe," and he started up excitedly. "It must be — yes, this is the very night," and looking wildly around. "More brandy, more I say, quick, I never thought of that. Yes, that is the very bed; curse the woman, she brought me trouble enough, and they said I killed her; ha, ha! I choked her, good — good — and they thought to give me to the law as a fitting example, but I outwitted them all, and I paid some of them back — that fire was an excellent idea, for every stroke he gave I paid him back that night; but more brandy — more liquor." He arose, staggering toward the bed, catching hold of the post to steady himself ere he lay down, "but just a drop more, just a drop," and he endeavored to twist himself in the direction of the fiery liquid.

Ha! what spectre is this that confronts him as he holds up his arms to shut out the fearful apparition! What terrible vision! Is it his drunken fancy, playing upon the stories of the evening; some wild fantasy, or is it *real*? For before — almost touching him — stood

Rufus Applegarth, his face white as marble, teeth clinched, the breath coming short and quick between them, lips bloodless, and the eye fixed.

The Jew's arms fell but to meet the same sight; he was suddenly transfixed with dread, his gaze became riveted, his eyes protruded from their sockets with a wild, nameless fear.

"In God's name, who are you?" he whispers hoarsely and then, "I know, I know." He attempted to scream but his mouth was dried, his lips glued together; he tried to move, but his limbs refused, powerless to answer the will, he could only stand horror stricken.

Slowly, and yet more slowly, nearer and nearer moved Rufus Applegarth, his hands not far apart and stretched out before him. The Jew is speechless, spell bound. Great drops of sweat stained with blood stand out upon his forehead and roll down his palsied cheeks; his jaws clatter as though violently shaken. Twice he essayed to shriek, but his voice only found utterance in hoarse whispers. Is it a dream, a nightmare? He cannot raise hand or foot to defend himself. The other's breath is hot upon his brow; he sees the face before him as though it had been that of the woman who had died — *died* — killed here upon this very spot. For once, and once only in all his life did the son bear resemblance to his mother, and it was perfect.

From out the Jew's parched mouth and drier lips, comes feebly, tremblingly forth, the one sentence, his last.

“You — are — my son,— *spare* —” and came hissing back the answer.

“I *am* — your son —” and the outstretched hands touched him, clasped about his neck, around his throat, tighter, tighter, no relaxing, no sound is heard. Suddenly a gust of wind came, the house is shaken to its foundation, a minute after a low gurgling noise and there lies on the bed an old man with white, flowing, matted hair and beard — strangled — strangled to death.

Stealthily, softly, he escaped from the balcony, closing the shutters carefully behind, rushes out into the wild night; the blasts whistling by cry murder, the winds moan among the trees and they speak murder, the rain dashes against his face whispering murder, parricide, on — on — but the cry, the speech, the whisper are ever there. Pressing through the storm, now under shelter of a friendly wall, again in the wet and cold, at last to the church beneath the portal. Is it the body of the slain man lying at his feet? Poor distorted imagination! It is but the wearied form of little Fan breathing heavily, yet it cries aloud, accuses him. Turning, the very stones over the graves seem to cry out against him, and faster than ever he flees from the place. No sorrow goads, no tears soften, no regret pains — restless in body, with mind a blank, one set purpose accomplished, the strain is great — too great — more than he can bear, and the mental chord is snapped in twain. Still on across the

fields, over roads and deep streams, faster — faster — he speeds through the gloom and the wet, until the clouds break away and the sun comes forth brightly, as it had done that morning one year ago. Nearing the metropolis, they try to arrest his course; strong men lay hold on him, but he casts them off like withes of straw. Still onward speeding, instinct guiding, to his old lodging house, and here he is taken, amid the lamentations of the kind hearted landlady, and they carry him to an asylum, a raving madman.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

R E S T.

THERE is a stir in Wentworth. A man has been found dead at the Great George Inn. Was it murder? Scarcely. No one could have approached him unobserved. Spiggott had parted with him last, and heard the door secured as he withdrew; it had to be broken open to gain admittance. Then what meant those ugly, black marks around the throat — the prints of fingers? what meant the protruding eyes? what the fixed look of horror stamped upon the features by that last visitant, death?

The landlord was dazed, only knowing that last night was that fearful anniversary; others whispered it, and the older people of the village remember and shake their heads in a knowing manner. Mr. Leslie is there. Lord St. Maur has been sent for; he is the highest magistrate in all the county, and there is a prevailing idea in this primeval place that he is next the Sovereign in authority. There is no part for, nor use of official capacity here, he cannot unravel the mystery or restore the dead. A strange death in London is nothing, a strange death in Wentworth everything. Papers have been found upon the body of the dead man — mysterious papers. Mr. Leslie holds

them as custodian, has glanced over them sufficiently to inform himself that a dark page of life is being slowly unravelled. There are letters in an old pocket-case that seem, from their worn, creased, torn appearance, to have been constantly carried about the person of the possessor, and in them occur the name of Mathew Matherton. To an intelligent mind the different threads are quickly joined, and is woven one complete story.

Mr. Leslie has recognized in the dead the visitor of the previous evening. They at the Rectory must know nothing of this, and St. Maur takes precautions to prevent it reaching them.

“Where is the surgeon? Where is Dr. Applegarth? has any one seen him?” But the enquiries die away unanswered, and the Rector does not pursue them. Suddenly Freeman Tasker made his appearance, running, skipping, as fast as his ungainly gait would allow, his face very white, rushing up to Mr. Leslie, exclaiming:

“Oh! sir, sir, come quick, there is a dead person in the church yard.”

“A score of them, friend Freeman,” said Spiggott, “who don’t know that?” and his speech created a ripple of mirth.

But from his deep earnestness and excited manner, the sexton commanded attention, grasping the Rector’s hand and pulling him in the direction. “Oh! sir, do come quick,” he repeated, and looking appealingly at

those around. "Good people, come, they might say I did it."

The crowd, not displeased at a fresh subject for wonder, quickly followed the lead of Mr. Leslie and St. Maur, and entering the church yard, there, just in the portal of the open-arched vestibule lay a little girl, cold and inanimate, her short dress sadly draggled, shoes worn and smeared with mud, streaming hair tangled and disheveled, indicating an exposure and privation far beyond her power of endurance. The sexton lingered in the rear for fear of being charged with participation in what he supposed the development of another crime, whilst Mr. Leslie approached and kneeling over the little figure, tenderly placed his hand upon the brow and lips, the others closing in around him.

"Is she dead?"

"No; in a deep slumber," he replied; "but she must be awakened. Give me a wrapping, some of you, this one is wet, and she is very cold."

A woman advanced and threw a warm and dry shawl around her, the minister lifted the wan, chill hand; the motion and noise roused her, and starting up and gazing around, surprised to find herself the cynosure of so many eyes, pushed back with either hand the tangled clusters of hair from her face.

"My poor child, what are you doing here?" said the minister, in his sympathetic tone. She looked at his mild, blue eyes; his kindly, noble face gave her courage.

"Please, sir, is this Wentworth?" said the weak voice of little Fan.

"Yes, my child; but you must let us take you to a warm, dry place and give you food, before we can tell you any more."

"Oh! sir, please, sir, but *is this* Wentworth?"

"Yes, it be Wentworth," said several coarse voices, in concert, who were leaning close over to catch a glimpse of the strange object.

"Oh! could you, would you pray tell—tell me where Miss Carleton lives?" and she stepped down from the stone threshold as if to push her way through the throng, to the desired haven; but her worn, tired limbs refused to carry her, and she would have fallen had not St. Maur caught her in his arms, tenderly lifting her up as he whispered:

"I will take you to Miss Carleton, if you wish to see her so very much."

"Please, sir, take me to her." And little Fan looked up into the brave, handsome face above, and then tired nature gave way and she became insensible.

St. Maur, pulling the wrapping tightly to ward off the chill, frosty air, carried her as easily as he would an infant to the Rectory—Mr. Leslie keeping by his side—and then gave her up to the Rector's sister, a maiden lady, who had ever lived with her brother, in whom alone she thought there was worth and excellence beyond compare, and little Fan was soon tucked in a warm, soft bed, with gentle hands, and kind hearts to

nurse, and life-long friends to watch over and protect her.

Ere long, she had told the burden of her sorrowful story and wanderings, and the beautiful lady who had treated her kindly—perhaps the only time little Fan had ever been treated kindly in all her life—was informed of the terrible machinations encompassing her, and the mountains of imaginary evils the child had conjured up in her overwrought fancy, to her great joy, dwindled into the useless conspiracies of wicked malevolence against the strong power of the law and innocence.

St. Maur and the Rector had been recalled to the inn where the people had again gathered.

A posse of policemen had arrived, headed by a noted detective, in search for the recapture of Mathew Matherton, an escaped convict, at liberty for more than twenty years, and they had found him—dead. St. Maur and Mr. Leslie exchanged meaning glances. The Rector took him aside for a moment.

“Have you no suspicion? Can you understand all this?”

“Yes,” replied the other, “it is clear enough. Where do you suppose he is?” It was hardly worth while to mention the name, they instinctively knew the surgeon was meant.

“God only knows,” asseverated the minister. “Of late, I have considered his mind disordered. Upon one subject only was he clear, and that he understood.

thoroughly; I mean his profession. Had he taken a different path and chosen, he could have stood first among the men of his kind. I think the people of the village, from his sudden disappearance, suspect something, but refrain from accusing, because he has been kind to many of them without reward."

"What do you think should be done?" questioned St. Maur. "Even if he has committed this deed, which, knowing what we do, we can hardly suppose otherwise, the law will not hold him responsible, if, as you say, his mind is affected."

"There is nothing we can do," rejoined the minister, "except find out his whereabouts. I am convinced that he has either made away with himself, or will be taken up and placed in confinement. I shall appear before the Magistrate or Coroner and give these papers up, explain them as best I may; it is for them to take the necessary measures. Is it not horrible! terrible! and there is another for whom I feel all the more solicitude; you may know whom I mean."

"Yes, Miss Egerton. I have seen and known it for a long time. It will be a bitter blow to her; but it will be best not to say anything until we know something more definite, more certain, and then it must be broken very gently. God grant that our surmises may be wrong; the man may have had enemies."

"No," responded Mr. Leslie, "I have gone over the whole circumstances thoroughly in my mind, and I can see no other solution, no other explanation. I must own with great sorrow, that to me it is conclusive."

“As you say,” continued St. Maur, mournfully. “It seems to point to but one conclusion. However, let us hope for the best. I will immediately hasten to London, and if Dr. Applegarth has been discovered, anything that my influence or friendship can accomplish, shall be dealt out freely for him, and upon my return, I will call at the Rectory. Would you ask Miss Carleton if I might see her there?” The blood mounted to his face as he said this last, and the Rector with a kindly compliance and warm pressure of the hand, left him.

CHAPTER XXIX.

LIGHT.

IT was a foggy day—one of London's real damp, foggy days. Old Mr. Smiles was in possession of the intermediate, or second office, at Proctor's. It must be confessed he did not relish it as much as his old familiar perch on the high stool. He had a desk now—a low double desk—at which he sat between the two parts. The same papers that were left formerly to his care were still confided to him, laying in sorted piles around and before him. Not having been accustomed to them in their new places, at times, when he desired a particular item or account, for a moment he would become lost in a maze of bewilderment, being obliged to go over the whole of the different piles, until securing the desired document and putting it in a specially designated spot, simply, when wanted, not to be remembered, and the same search gone over, until, at times, he would lay back in his chair, remove his spectacles, wipe his eyes, and heartily wish himself back in the old seat.

It was in one of these weary moments that Mr. Proctor opened the inner door, smiling, as he observed the evident state of affairs.

“What, Smiles, getting your papers into new shape?”

"Yes, sir," vainly trying to conceal a slight tone of hopelessness.

"Here, let me help you," said the other. "My desk is similar to yours;" and Mr. Proctor picked up a bundle of the unruly packages and placed them in a side case, others in pigeon-holes, and thus he went on until he thought the other had caught the system, albeit Mr. Smile's brain was more muddled than ever.

"You see that is the way I fix mine, and I find them convenient for reference."

"Ah, it is a good way, an excellent plan," rejoined the ex-clerk. "I will follow it, sir. You see it's hard to get out of my old ways all at once."

"Now, Smiles, I shall step around myself to Squint's; beard the lion in his den—more likely interrupt the scoundrel in his rascally work. But I have a curiosity to inspect Madam '*et l'infant terrible*.' By the way, it's strange Laroque has not been here; he was never so dilatory before. You say you've called twice."

"Yes, sir, twice, and again to-day. He's on some undertaking about Wentworth, I was told."

"Ah! about Wentworth," Mr. Proctor repeated, quickly.

Just then, a keen-eyed, dapper little man entered, to whom the agent held out his hand, condescendingly, but familiarly. The detective's services had been required before, and it was well to keep on the right side of these people. There was no telling what secrets they carried in their breasts.

"Ah, Laroque, I was just inquiring the reason of your not coming. It has been more than a week since I sent for you."

"Received your message; could not come. Something special to work up; no time to be lost," jerked out the dapper little man, as he passed into the agent's private room.

"Laroque," said Mr. Proctor, "there is some information I want to obtain in regard to the movements of Squint, the attorney. I suppose you know whom I mean?"

"Know him well," snapped out the detective, as if time were too precious to waste, even in words.

"Well, he is trying to black mail the Carleton property, in regard to which perhaps you know my relations, and I don't intend he shall do it. I want you to find out about a presumed fictitious heir he is attempting to foist upon the estate."

"Ha! ha! ha!" broke out the detective sharply, and to the no little disconcertion of the other. "Know all about it. Was in with the job all the time; was on the lay; had false beard on; met him in Paris; thought he'd recognize me; didn't; all grist that comes to my mill; might as well pick up information; might be useful; made clean work; played it very well; got warrant for his arrest in my pocket; trap the whole batch; don't get off too soon." And he who was a detective, in his proper character, now acknowledged that he, disguised as a French physician in

Paris, had become Squint's fortuitous acquaintance and pretended accomplice.

Proctor looked at him wonderingly for a moment, somewhat in admiration of the other's success in his peculiar avocation of espial, and said, as a compliment, but very truly, "Laroque, you understand your sphere of occupation thoroughly; none better. So I suppose there is no use in my troubling further about the matter." And he felt thankful at his own narrow escape in the complication, for, even at this incipient stage, it was clearly discovered. What a bungling set they must have been.

"Wouldn't worry about it, sir; not at all. Squint was put up to it by one Mathew Matherton, formerly an escaped convict, but for many years a pawnbroker under the very nose of the law, and never detected until *I* took it in hand. It was he who set fire to Carleton House. No doubt of it, sir, no doubt; but he balked us after all, for we took him dead;" and the officer, although his tone was regretful, rubbed his hands in self-approval.

"You've been down to Wentworth?" said Mr. Proctor, carelessly, not at all interested in the subject of the capture. Sufficient the incendiary was beyond the reach of punishment. And he stood unconcernedly, with his back partly turned, running a penknife across his well-shaped nails. "Anything new there?"

"Nothing, nothing. Slight commotion. Escaped convict killed by his son, a surgeon; safe in custody;

mad house. Something going to take place; town talk; keep ears open; Miss Carleton — ”

“Miss Carleton! eh! what?” inquired Proctor, more carelessly, as if deeply engrossed in the mysteries of nail-burnishing.

“Miss Carleton; Lord St. Maur; saved her life; get married; live happily.”

“What!” cried Mr. Proctor, with excited interest. “Speak more plainly.”

“All true, every word. Nothing taken place yet, but soon will. All come true, every word. Must be going. Good morning.”

“Stop,” commanded Mr. Proctor, hoarsely, grasping his arm with a firmer grip, while his face turned ashen-hued as, by a great effort, he went calmly on: “I know you too well to let what you say pass idly by. Keen observation and danger have taught you to weigh words well, and to speak only when certainty marks the conclusion. Is this thing so?”

“Will come as I say. Saw and heard enough myself to convince me. Good match—just suited—all will come to pass.”

“It is enough—that will do,” replied the other, wearily, passing his hand across his brow.

“Good morning, sir. Ill? Send somebody?” said the astute officer, accustomed to all phases of the hidden feelings of life.

“No; good morning,” repeated Mr. Proctor, absently, to the departing figure. Opening a spring in his escre-

toire, and then a private receptacle, he drew forth a small portraiture of a sweet, lovely face — the artist's photographed copy of the picture at Carleton Park — Lucille's.

Not presented to him, certainly. Its possession was unknown to *her*. It might have been clandestinely picked up abroad, perhaps at Carleton Park. The man bent over it, with blanched lips, throbbing brain and trembling hand, and thus the noon, the evening, found him. "Lost! lost! lost!"

Mr. Smiles, the newly-fledged partner, still lingered in the outer office. Mr. Proctor must have forgotten his intended errand about Squint. Probably he had reconsidered it, maybe forgotten it entirely. Lunch came and passed, but the senior member did not make his appearance. Mr. Smiles did not care to let interruption be the first breach of the old rules in his advanced position. Looking up at the big-dialled clock, with its brass indicator, that hung on the wall, it was late. He listened, but there was no sound. At last, as the shadows began to wane, he felt nervous, uneasy. "Psha!" he muttered, "I'm impatient. He stayed in the other day, but not so long," anxiously. "Were I in the old place, perhaps I wouldn't notice it."

Then he heard the desks in the outer apartment closed, one by one. The under clerks were getting their hats and coats down; they were talking, jesting; the day's work was over.

"I can't stand this," muttered Mr. Smiles, nervously; "I don't understand it;" and, walking to the closed

door, put his hand upon the knob and again listened. No sound. Softly he opened it, not looking in, only said,

"It's closing time, sir. Shall I light your gas?" The clerkly spirit had not departed with the fresh honors and emoluments. To his benefactor he would ever be the same help, the same servant.

No answer came. So, thrusting his head through the opening, he looked in. There sat Mr. Proctor, his hands clasped, his head bowed down.

"Are you unwell, sir? Are you ill?"

A vacant, stony stare was the only reply, and then, suddenly, the eyes seemed to soften, a tiny drop started, and the strong man leant forward upon the desk and the tears flowed fast.

"Oh, sir, you are in distress?" cried the ex-clerk, exhibiting almost as much agitation as the other. "Is there nothing I can do? God knows I would help you, if I could;" and he seized the other's hand, pressing it tightly.

This brought Mr. Proctor back to recollection and reality. Rising, he returned the pressure, saying softly, "Ah, Smiles, there are times in all our lives when the strongest have their weak moments. Believe me, I am grateful for your sympathy, for I know it is disinterested. But it is past; it is over now."

"Is it a burden I could help to bear?" and Mr. Smiles looked as if he would like to take it all upon himself, yet at a loss to know its meaning; but no depth of imagination could penetrate its darkness.

"Nothing, nothing. Ah, Smiles, we old men are, after all, the worst of fools. My nerves have been unstrung of late. I shall go away for a time, and, if you would do me a favor, forget this as though it never happened," and, wringing his hand, he left the room—left the place.

Mr. Smiles looked down at the scattered papers, which, for once, had been left in confusion, and there, just by the chair, lay the picture. He started. A gleam of light was breaking in upon him. His hands should not desecrate it. If Mr. Proctor valued a lady's photograph, it should be sacred from him. The impulse to gather and restore the confused mass vanished. Leaving everything—picture and papers—without a breath stirring their fall, he softly, on tiptoe, stole back and out of the door, locking it. Ay, but the janitor had his fellow keys, and would enter to sweep and clean. Mr. Proctor should never know that mortal eye had gazed upon even a broken thread binding the link leading to his heart. The janitor might come in the night, in the early dawn. The ex-clerk might mistake the hour. Sleep might overtake him. There must be *certainty*. He kept watch and ward through all the weary vigils of the night, and that room was not touched, those papers unseen. Mr. Proctor, appearing at the usual time in the morning, his face white, the thin lips more tightly pressed, the lines about the eyes more plainly marked, passed by, unnoticing the weary look of his fellow-partner—passed by him, nearly reached his own door, halted, turned, as

though he had forgotten it. Well done, Mr. Proctor, well acted, but your audience is not deceived. Why, therefore, make imposition upon a faithful henchman? But to Mr. Smiles' grieving spirit the gleam of light is getting broader and now is the perfect day.

"Ah! Smiles, I had almost forgotten. Try and have those accounts of the Carleton estate and all matters appertaining to it, fixed up as quickly as possible. Miss Carleton, I hear, contemplates matrimony."

There was an almost imperceptible tremor in the voice at "Miss Carleton." Mr. Smiles understands now. The dawn is there; he knows the sorrows, the anguish, only murmuring: "Very well, sir." And the other went in.

And after a time, people come and go, pass in and out; but the ex-clerk is tired to-day, and he steals off, not for rest, but reflection, and his thoughts take the shape and cling around the image of a fair American girl, for a short time, a former fellow lodger, and his thoughts form this answer to the lips:

"Ah! Smiles, we old men are, after all, the worst of fools." And thereafter, daily, at Mr. Cashbid's portal, he left a little bunch of fresh flowers, and sometimes the donor sees and speaks to the recipient, and old Mr. Smiles and Bessie are fast friends, nothing more.

There is a poignant grief pressing on the young girl's spirit, a change in her once merry voice, a weary, waiting look. For hours she sits with clasped hands, silently, patiently waiting, waiting for a return of

reason to the lost mind—a return that will never come. Her uncle and aunt are all kindness; they love her as much—better, they say—than if she were their own child. There is no lack of loving words, no lack of loving deeds. St. Maur and Mr. Leslie have done their best. Almost daily, a carriage draws up to the great building, dark and gloomy, with outstretched wings, like a great vulture hovering between the sun and earth. The Cashbids and Bessie alight. They are taken to a cell. She sees him—who was ever kind to her, and true. Once only has a ray of reason shot into those vacant, listless eyes, and that once, she was all he recognized; that past and forever, it is the same, and she returns—to wait patiently, wait.

There are other changes elsewhere, less important and not so solemn. Richard Fasting, alias “Slummer’s Dick,” of once attractive memory, has resumed his spruce condition and taken the Variety actress to Paris, having disposed of his suspicious plunder at one-third its real value, and the twain have wasted the money; but the cautious Rosa, inadvertently warned by her “friend,” had advised Daniel in time to gather the best of the fruits of his labor—“purquisits,” as he was pleased to denominate them—and make away with such to the best advantage, so when Richard’s fortune had collapsed, she judiciously drew the other string to her bow and flattered the youthful Daniel into the belief that he was her paragon, her first and only love.

CHAPTER XXX.

CONCLUSION.

Fair lady, thou shalt never know
Of time called "weary hours;"
God grant, thy future ever be
A pathway strewn with flowers.

IT was a mild, unruffled day. A still, quiet calm pervaded the atmosphere that hung over Maurland Towers and Wentworth, which seemed unconsciously to speak of peace, rest and joy.

St. Maur, riding up to the Rectory gate, loosely threw the bridle rein to his groom, and with a light, firm step traversed the shrub-bordered walk. Hope, the blessed comforter of the human heart, filled his breast with bright, sweet visions; there was a buoyancy in his spirits, though mingled with a strain of sadness.

Trevellyan's last words were to tell him of the success of that hope; and yet it might be, that in her sorrow, gratitude and sympathy had played too great a part and wrung from her what might afterward be regretted; but his soul could tell if the love he yearned for was there.

The Rectory door stood open and he passed in without ceremony, glancing into Mr. Leslie's study, but the occupant was not there. He could not long

have departed, for the ink was scarcely dried on the open sheet of paper. Could the Rector have deserted purposely, upon discerning the other approach? St. Maur passed on to the parlor, and entered. A lady's household account lay negligently thrown aside, as if quitted hastily. Had the Rector's sister intentions too, and in her hurried excuse and withdrawal, was there more of purpose than casualty? The red, autumnal sun streaming in through the half-open curtains, shone through the trembling leaves of the scarlet-colored plants in the casements, and lingeringly rested on the fair brow of Lucille, lighting up the wealth of wavy, chestnut hair, as though burnished gold.

Glancing up and catching sight of the unexpected intruder, a vague, undefined feeling of trepidation thrilled her bosom, the old color returned, the hair fell back from the lovely face; the dark, shadowy eyes, were clear, pure, as the soul within. For a moment St. Maur could only pause and gaze on the sweet form before him; for an instant, the very life itself seemed hushed, and then the full tide of love rushed over him as she arose and essayed to come forward. Their eyes met. Oh, Heaven! how strange, how perfect thy wise decrees. Soul cried to soul! heart spake to heart! as taking her hand gently, he said:

"May I hope? Shall this be mine?" And tenderly, lovingly, he clasps the little hand. She raised her soft, pleading eyes, full of faith and love.

"Yes." And he draws her gently to him; nearer,

closer; the lovely face finds sure refuge there, and his whole heart goes out as he clasps her to his breast and whispers that one sweet word:

“Lucille!”

Laugh at it, ye callous, who know not what feeling is! Mock at it, ye scoffers, who find a subject even in your Maker! but that love is there which passeth all understanding, which cares not for your idle merriment, not for your jeers, which stands pure and bared in the silent presence of Jehovah alone, acknowledging him only as its Creator and its God.

* * * * *

A small, quiet, but happy assemblage is gathered at Carleton House, Great Carleton Place, in the city's “west end.” There are no great preparations for show or ostentation, but everything goes merry as the sweet chimes of marriage bells—and there is a wedding. Lucille has awaited the coming of distant relatives, and these, with a few of Lord St. Maur's nearest of kin, form the only company.

Mr. Leslie performs the ceremony, and never has he so gladly or earnestly read that service, at whose conclusion, little Fan utters a low, solemn “amen,” as if her whole heart cried one glad wish.

The Duchess of Farnborough was there, elated, proud of her nephew; proud of the representative of her House and race, as she repeated softly to herself, “*Servata fides ceneri.*” The promise had been kept. Lucille, the same lovely face, the dark, wavy hair

pushed back, the trustful, gentle eyes, the same true woman; and he, never more a St. Maur than now, the brow illuminated with an instinctive nobility of soul, the heart's craving filled, and so they pass on through the pleasant paths of life's years.

St. Maur, ever growing in renown, rising to still more exalted positions, until all men know and praise him in the highest. Pleased, happy in these, but supremely glorying in the most loved, the fairest of women at his side.


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
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
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
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
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
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
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
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
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
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
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
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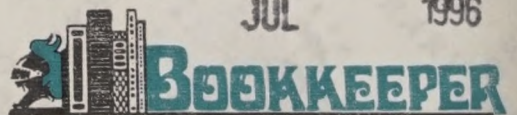
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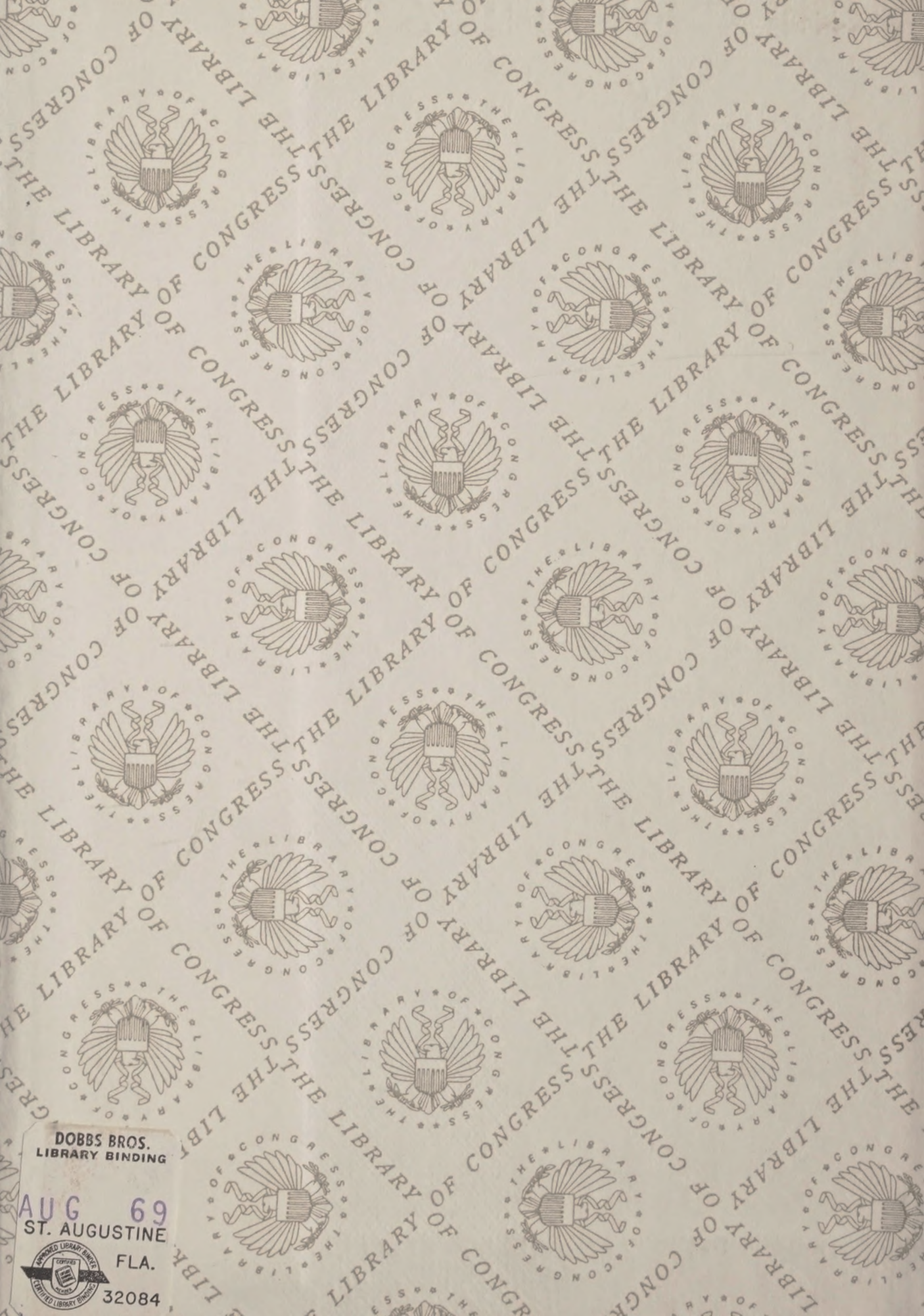
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